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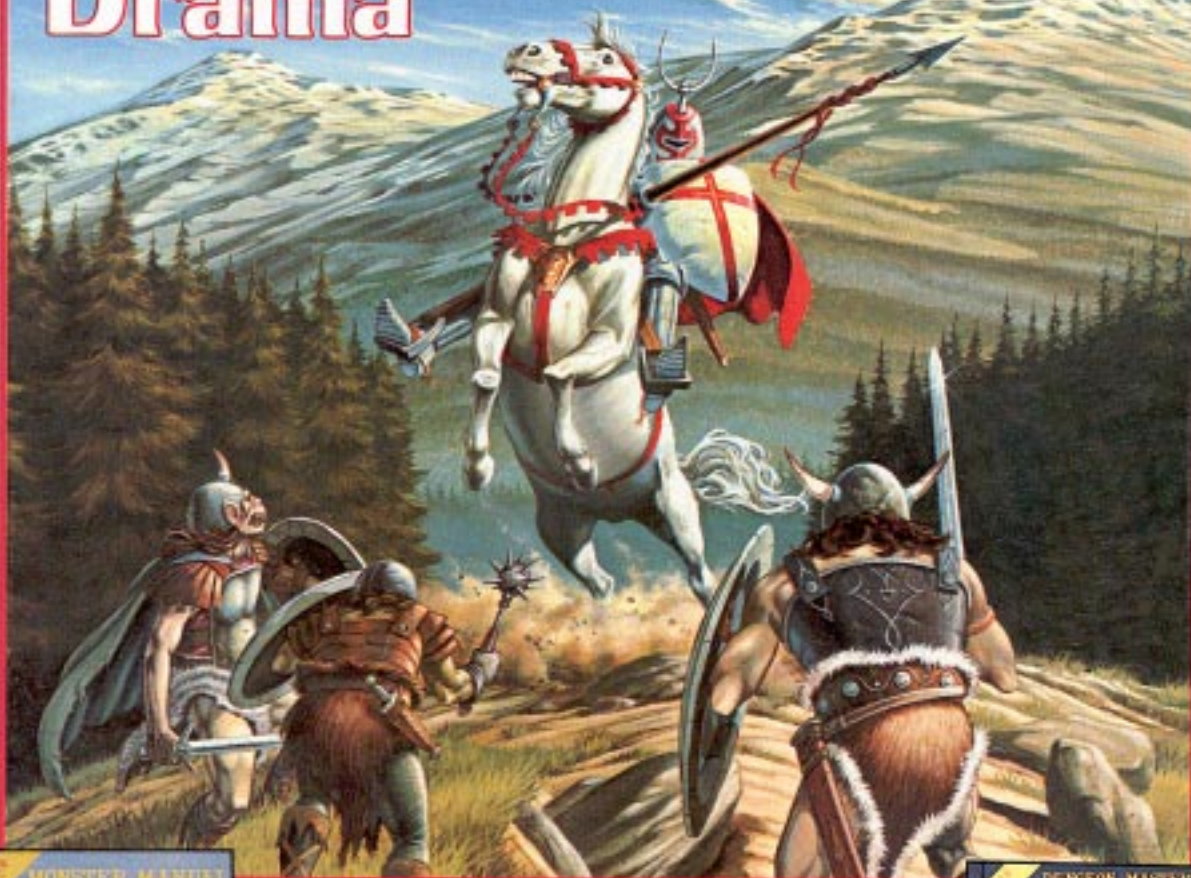
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#71

- BOOT HILLTM module
- Attack Priority
- New druid spells

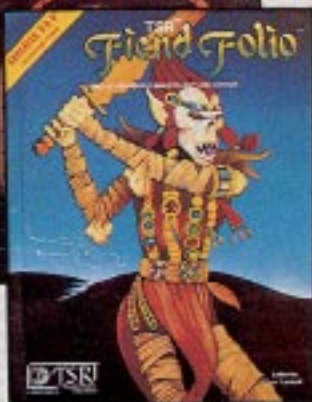


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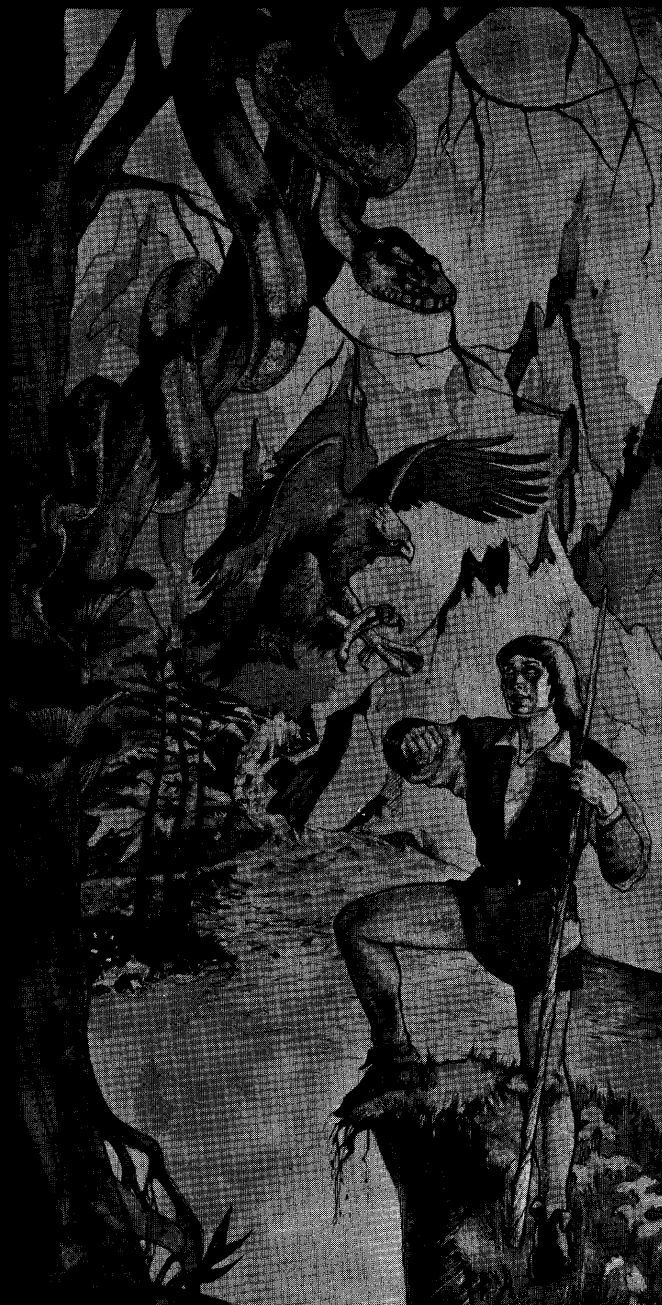
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It can be won

This issue marks somewhat of a special occasion: the announcement and publication of the first winner in our Module Design Contest. Congratulations to Donald Mumma of Lyons, Ind., for THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE, an idea that we judged to be the most unusual and most refreshing entry in the category for BOOT HILL™ adventures. Don is a member of that big gamers' club otherwise known as the U.S. Army. He "built" the town of Brimstone while stationed in Germany, and reports having tested it on six different groups of players. However, he doesn't mention whether any of those characters finished what they started.

The second-place contestant in the "cowboy category" is Ed R. Teixeira of Hayward, Calif., and the third-place winner is Eric Conrad of Weymouth, Mass. Our regards to the winners, and our thanks to everyone else who entered but couldn't be recognized.

This is an appropriate time to point out the rather obvious fact that it is possible to construct a prize-winning entry for our contest and stay within the limitations set down by the rules. A few people have complained to us about the stipulation that modules have to use the official rules for a game, and additions to the rules will only be allowed when they are necessary because of the nature of the module.

A referee who reads through the module in this magazine will note *many* additions to the rules — all of them necessary because of how the module is designed, and none of them in conflict with any of the systems in the game rules. What you *won't* find in it are new kinds of guns, new ways of defining or generating character abilities, or any other changes of that sort. Don't try to redesign a game to your liking; that's okay in the privacy of your own playing group, but when you write a module for our contest you *have* to stick by the rules, so your adventure will be usable and enjoyable by everyone who tries to run it.

* * *

In my editorial in issue #69, I referred to Gary Gygax as the "creator" of the two most popular fantasy role-playing games. This was not meant to imply that Gary Gygax is the sole creator of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game; in fact, Gary Gygax is a co-creator of that game.





ith apologies to the guy who does the intro for The Lone Ranger TV show, we hereby invite you to "return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear." Sit tall in the saddle, get a few friends together, and take a shot at THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE, the first adventure we've ever published for the BOOT HILL™ game and the first announced winner in our Module Design Contest. At first glance, Brimstone might seem like a nice enough little place — but wait till you get to know it!

For those of you who prefer spells and swords to six-guns and saddlebags, we've got Brimstone surrounded with a heaping helping of AD&D™ material. The longest and one of the strongest articles is Ronald Hall's detailed presentation of something he calls the Attack Priority system. It isn't very often that someone comes up with a variation on the AD&D melee combat system that's both sensible and simple to use, but we think this is just such an article — and we hope all you sword-swingers out there agree.

Just to prove he's not neutral on the subject of druids, Gary Gygax has conjured up a collection of official new spells for that class in this issue's edition of *From the Sorcerer's Scroll*. You'll also find more of EGG's *Deities & Demigods* of *Greyhawk* inside, plus a quartet of personalities who are not quite deities — and not quite like anything you've ever seen before — in *Greyhawk's World*. (I wonder what would happen if Murlynd found his way to Brimstone?)

One of the commandments of AD&D gaming, as we see it, is the time-honored "Always give a monster an even break." Our latest treatise on that topic is Bruce Humphrey's "Mind of the monster," some well-chosen words for DMs on how intelligence and personality should affect the "play" of monsters, just as for the characters those monsters fight.

We tried to cover the Astral Plane as completely as we thought possible with Roger Moore's excellent article back in issue #67 — but I guess we should have expected our diligent readers to think of some things we didn't. Well, that's just what happened, and the result is a special "astral edition" of our *Sage Advice* column, wherein Roger offers some answers and observations (and some plain old excuses) that go even further toward nailing down the definition of an adventuring environment that's awfully hard to get a handle on.

For a real change of pace from magic as we know it in the AD&D world, try this month's fiction piece, "The Blink of a Wizard's Eye." And the next time you have an absolutely rotten day, you can take heart in the knowledge that it's not *your* fault. . . . — KM



Plea for psionics

Dear Editor:

In all the Issues of DRAGON I have collected, I cannot recall ever seeing an article dedicated to the use of psionics in an AD&D setting. I know I'm not alone when I say that I'm greatly interested in learning more about the effects and limitations of psionics.

Would it be possible to have one of your talented staff research and write an article on psionics? I eagerly look forward to seeing such an undertaking, and in particular the answers to these questions: If a demon or devil is psionically killed on the Prime Material Plane, is he still just banished to his own plane? And, can a psionic creature or character get a "free shot" on the first assault upon a similar character, using Table IV. B. (Psionic Attack Upon Defenseless Psionic), or does the opponent's defense go up immediately prior to the initial attack?

Brett A. Rock
Dunstable, Mass.

Yes, Brett, we should do something with psionics; no, it probably wouldn't be possible for our talented staff members to do it, because their talents are being used in other ways already. It's a subject that does indeed deserve attention — and as soon as someone sends in a manuscript on psionics that we can use, we'll pset the record pstraight. — KM

Misleading movie

Dear Editor:

After seeing "Mazes and Monsters" on nationwide television, I wonder what in the world people think gamers do in the backs of gaming shops, in schools, and at conventions.

I have never heard of role-playing games going so far as to act out an entire dungeon adventure. Occasionally, my DM will ask me to explain how my character would do something, and I may have to demonstrate — but never to the point of endangering anyone.

I explained to my parents, friends, and relatives what the D&D game is about, and they know that gaming will not lead me to the life of a "crazed killer in New York" as the movie depicted. I believe that D&D is a great pastime and a great way of self-expression. Gamers know what D&D is really like.

Marc C. Matthews
Knoxville, Tenn.

More miniatures

Dear Editor:

I am very interested in miniature figures. I (and maybe other readers interested in the same topic) would like to see more pictures of

painted figures as in issues #63 and #68. Maybe some other figure painters would want to send in pictures of their miniatures, and you could set aside a page or two to display them. I would also like to see more figure reviews in future issues.

Michael Blum
Farmington Hills, Mich.

Without meaning to sound mysterious, Michael, I can say that we've made some definite arrangements to print some more full-color photos of miniatures within the next issue or two. And if you saw last month's magazine, you know we're resurrecting our figure review column, now being prepared by expert evaluator Kim Eastland.

Setting aside even just a page or two for figure photos isn't as easy as it may seem; sometimes an article will end up running longer than we estimate, and pages get taken up that we would have liked to use for other things. We ran out of room in this issue and couldn't give you another "Figure Feature" right away — but the column will return next month, and we hope we won't have to miss an issue again. — KM

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New druid spells . . . naturally!

by Gary Gygax

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There are only a few new druid spells offered here. This is not because I have run out of ideas or am lazy. Len Lakofka has spent a considerable amount of effort in devising numbers of new cleric and druid spells for the AD&D™ Expansion volume, and I am considering those spells as official, so what I present here for your inspection, coupled with Len's work, provides an ample number of new spells for the druid class.

One word about "Official" material presented herein: I wish to point out that the term does not mean that the material is graven on stone! Whether it is something I have done, Len Lakofka has written, Frank Mentzer has devised, or whatever, it is given here as *official* but in many cases it is still experimental, so to speak. When official material is gathered and prepared for print in final form, it is most likely to undergo change. Some will appear virtually unaltered, of course; some will be slightly revised; and some material will be substantially changed, whether due to your input or our own, or both.

In short, the game version is final and will always prevail over what is presented here. This is not to say that the material

presented in DRAGON™ Magazine is inferior, second rate, or otherwise lesser. It simply is *new*, possibly experimental, and often in prototypical form. You get it first, but it often needs more work. I trust the Gentle Readers will forgive me for using them as testers. . .

One more thing about official material. Roger Moore did such a splendid job with the non-human deities (see DRAGON issues #59-63) that I have urged TSR to include them in the next edition of the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia, whenever such a revision takes place. Meanwhile, you should most certainly regard the work as "Official"! (Those AD&D players who are employing the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ setting for their campaign can likewise incorporate this material into their activities if they so desire, although some alterations should be made to make sure the non-human deities reflect the WORLD OF GREYHAWK mode, as presented in several previous issues of this Splendid Journal.)

With the foregoing matters cleared up, let us move on to the meat of the matter, druid spells!

Detect Poison (Divination)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Level: 1 | Components: V, S, M |
| Range: 0 | Casting Time: 1 round |
| Duration: 1 round/level | Saving Throw: None |
| Area of Effect: Special | |

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell the druid is able to determine if some object, creature, or area contains poison or has been poisoned. In general, the area which can be perused by the dwomer of the spell is about 1 cubic yard of space. Therefore, the druid cannot determine if an entire pond is poisoned, but he or she could tell if a portion — or something within the portion — scanned during the round contained poison. There is also a 5% chance per level of experience that the type of poison used or contained in the area scanned will also be discovered by the spell, i.e. contact poison (insinuating), ingestive, or respirative (gas).

While more than one area can be scanned with a *detect poison* during the duration of the spell, it is almost fruitless to attempt to determine poison type for all of those same areas; any single failure on the "5% chance per level" roll to detect poison type makes the spell useless for this purpose for the rest of the duration of this particular casting.

In addition to mistletoe, the druid needs a yew leaf as a material component for this spell. The latter item will turn brown if poison is present, so that several will be needed to fully utilize the entire spell duration.

Precipitation (Alteration)

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Level: 1 | Components: V, S, M |
| Range: 1 "/level | Casting Time: 3 segments |
| Duration: 1 segment/level | Saving Throw: None |
| | (& special) |

Area of Effect: 3" d. cylinder up to 12" high

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, all water vapor in the atmosphere in the area of effect is precipitated in the form of a light rain. (Note that low-level spell casters will certainly be within the area of effect of the spell.) The rain will continue only for as many segments of time as the spell caster has levels of experience. Since only about 1/100th of an inch of precipitation falls during the course of a segment, the spell will have only the following general effects:

Thin, light material will become damp in 1 segment and thoroughly wet thereafter.

Twigs and heavy material such as canvas will be damp in 2 segments and wet thereafter.

Flat, relatively non-porous surfaces, such as stone floors, rock, painted wood, etc., will be damp in 1 segment and filmed with water thereafter.

Semi-porous surfaces and materials will become damp on the surface in 2 segments and thereafter the damp area will progress downward and/or inward accordingly, while after 5 segments the surface will also be wet.

Porous surfaces and materials will simply absorb the rain to

their entire capacity — probably well beyond that of the spell's duration.

Small flames, such as those of candles, will be extinguished by 1 segment of precipitation. Small fires will slow and become smoky for 1 round after precipitation has ceased. Large fires will not be materially affected by the spell.

Lightning cannot be called by the use of this spell. Tracking is impossible within the area of effect immediately after *precipitation* has fallen.

Note that if the temperature is above 90° F., the duration of the spell will be extended to double normal except in arid regions. Also, where the temperature is between 33° and 31° F. inclusive, the *precipitation* will fall in the form of sleet. At 30° F. and below, the *precipitation* will fall as rather thick snow, and most dampness/wetness effects will be negated until the snow melts. If magical heat of large area is applied to precipitation (i.e., a *wall of fire*, *fireball*, *flame strike*, etc.), a cloud of warm fog of double the area of the *precipitation* effect will be formed. If magical cold is applied to the spell or the water which remains thereafter, normal ice will be formed. Very hot creatures such as salamanders will suffer 1 point of damage for every segment they are within the area of effect of the spell. Such creatures are entitled to save versus magic.

The material components of the spell are a pinch of silver dust and the druid's sprig of mistletoe.

Flame Blade (Evocation)

Level: 2
Range: 0
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 3' long, sword-like blade

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: When a druid casts this spell, he or

she causes a blazing ray of red-hot fire to spring forth from his or her hand. This blade-like ray is actually wielded as if it were a scimitar, and if the druid scores a successful "to hit" die roll while employing a flame blade, the creature struck will take 5-8 hit points of damage — with a damage bonus of +2 if the creature is of the *undead* class or is vulnerable to fire, or a -2 penalty to damage if the creature is protected from fire. No damage can be caused to a creature which is a fire-dweller or uses fire as an attack form. The *flame blade* will ignite normally combustible materials such as parchment, straw, dry sticks, cloth, etc. However, it is not a magical weapon in the normal sense of the term except with respect to *undead* class monsters, so creatures that can be struck only by magical weapons are not harmed by this spell unless they are of the undead class.

In addition to mistletoe, the druid must have a leaf of sumac in order to cast this spell.

Goodberry (Alteration/Evocation) Reversible

Level: 2
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 day+1 day/
per level of the caster
Area of Effect: 2-8 fresh berries

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: When a druid casts a *goodberry* spell upon a handful of freshly picked berries, from 2 to 8 of them will become magical. The druid casting the spell (as well as any other druid of 3rd or higher level) will be able to immediately discern which berries were affected. A *detect magic* will discover this also. Berries with the *dweomer* will either enable a hungry creature of approximately man-size to eat one and be as well-nourished as if a full normal meal were eaten, or else the berry will cure 1 point of physical damage due to wounds or

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other similar causes, subject to a maximum of 8 points of such curing in any 24-hour period. The reverse of the spell, *badberry*, causes rotten berries to appear wholesome but each actually delivers 1 point of poison damage, no saving throw, if ingested.

The material component of the spell is mistletoe passed over the freshly picked, edible berries to be enspelled (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, etc.)

Reflecting Pool (Evocation-Divination)

Level: 2
Range: 1"
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2 hours
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the druid to cause a pool of normal water found in a natural setting to act as a scrying device. The pool can be of no greater diameter than 2'/level of the druid concerned. The effect is to create a scrying device similar to a *crystal ball*. (See the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, Miscellaneous Magic Treasure section, under *crystal ball*.) The scrying can extend only to those planes of existence which are co-existent with or border upon the Prime Material Plane, viz. the Inner Planes (including the Para-Elemental Planes, Plane of Shadow, *et al.*) Penalties for attempting to scry beyond the druid's own plane, as shown for the *crystal ball*, are applicable.

The druid must use both mistletoe and the oil extracted from such nuts as hickory and walnut, refined, and dropped in three measures upon the surface of the pool. (A measure need be no more than a single ounce of oil.)

Slow Poison (Necromatic)

Level: 2
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 hour/level
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 segment
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: This spell is identical to the second level cleric spell, *slow poison* (q.v.), except that if the druid is able to determine that the poison was one made from some living plant, he or she has a 5% chance per level of knowing an herbal antidote which will neutralize the toxin. (If the actual type of poison is not given by the DM, a successful casting of *detect poison* [type] indicates an organic poison which can be countered.) A dice roll equal to or less than the druid's chance to find an antidote indicates successful neutralization.

Rather than a holy/unholy symbol, the druid uses mistletoe as a material component, and crushed garlic is rubbed on the subject's feet. Antidotes must be obtained from green vegetation outdoors or from an herbalist or similar source of supply.

Cloudburst (Alteration)

Level: 3
Range: 1"/level
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: 3" d. cylinder up to 6" high
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5 segments
Saving Throw: None
(& special)

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell the caster causes the atmosphere to instantly precipitate all of its water vapor into huge drops of rain, the resulting condensation not only causing a true downburst of rain but also sucking more

vapor into the area to likewise be precipitated as rain. The *cloudburst* will effectively drench everything within its area of effect in 1 segment, for its rain will fall at the rate of 1/10th of an inch per segment, or one inch of rainfall in 1 round. (Cf. *precipitation* spell.)

All normal fires within the area of effect will be extinguished by a *cloudburst* — small ones instantly, medium ones in 3-5 segments, large ones in 8-10 segments. Magical fires will also be extinguished by a *cloudburst*, with the following general rules applying: Permanent magical fires will re-light in 1-2 rounds. Small, rekindable magic fires such as that of a *flame tongue* sword will be affected only during the *cloudburst*. Spells like *produce fire* and *burning hands* will be negated.

Large-area spells such as *fireball*, *flame strike*, *wall of fire*, etc., will, in the course of being extinguished, vaporize the rain, and a cloud of steam of quadruple area of effect volume will be created. This steam will inflict 1-3 points of damage on normal creatures within its area, double damage on cold-dwelling or cold-using creatures. It will persist for 2-5 rounds, half that if a breeze is blowing, or only 1 round if a strong wind is blowing.

Lightning cannot be called by the use of a *cloudburst*. Vision is reduced to 10' within the area of effect. All tracks within the area of effect are obliterated in 1 round.

In arid regions, the *cloudburst* will act only as a double-strength *precipitation* spell. In hot and humid areas, the duration of the spell will be extended to 2 rounds. In areas with a temperature between 33° and 31° F. inclusive, sleet rather than rain will fall, with ice and slush being formed when it accumulates. In temperatures of 30° F. and lower, the *cloudburst* becomes a *snowburst*, with one inch of snow falling per segment. Whether the vapor precipitates as rain, sleet, or snow, very hot creatures not saving versus magic within the area of the spell will suffer 10 points of damage, plus 1 point of additional damage for every segment they remain within the area of the *cloudburst*.

The material components for the spell are powdered silver and powdered iodine crystals, plus the druid's mistletoe.

Spike Growth (Alteration/Enchantment)

Level: 3
Range: 6"
Duration: 3-12 turns +1
Area of Effect: 1" square/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: Wherever any sort of plant growth of moderate size or intensity is found, this spell is of service. It enables the caster to cause ground-covering vegetation and/or roots and rootlets to become very hard and sharply pointed. In effect, ground cover, while appearing to be nothing different, serves as if it were *caltrops* (see new weapon types in *DRAGON* #64). Roots and rootlets will do the same in areas of bare ground or earthen pits. Without a spell such as *true seeing*, similar magical aids, or some other special means of detection (such as *detect traps*), an area affected by *spike growth* is absolutely undetectable until a victim enters it and takes damage. Even then, the creature will not be able to determine the extent of the area affected by the *spike growth* unless it has some means of magic detection. Each 1" of movement by a potential victim incurs 2 "attacks" (cf. *spike stones*). Spells which will control or harm vegetation, as well as a *dispel magic*, will negate the area of the *dweomer*. Otherwise, the spell will remain potent until its natural duration expires.

The components for this spell are the druid's mistletoe and seven small twigs, each sharpened to a point, or else seven sharp thorns.

Starshine (Evocation-Illusion)

Level: 3
Range: 1"/level
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: 1 square" per level

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: A *starshine* spell enables the druid to softly illuminate an area as if it were exposed to a clear night sky filled with stars. Regardless of the height of the open area in which the spell is cast, the area immediately beneath it will be lit by *starshine*. Vision will be clear at up to 30', indistinct to 60', and beyond that only gleams and glimmers will be discernible. The *starshine* allows shadows. It enhances ultravision to its full potential but does not affect infravision. The spell makes the area of effect actually appear to be a night sky, but disbelief merely allows the disbeliever to note that the "stars" are actually the evoked lights of a *starshine* spell.

The material components are several stalks from an amaryllis (especially Hypoxis) and several holly berries.

Liveoak (Enchantment)

Level: 5
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 day/level
Area of Effect: 1 oak tree

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the druid to select a healthy oak tree and cast a dweomer upon it so as to cause it to serve as a protector. The spell can be cast on but a single tree at a time, and while a *liveoak* spell cast by a particular druid is in effect, he or she cannot cast a second such spell.

The tree upon which the dweomer is cast must be within 10' of the druid's dwelling place, within a place sacred to the druid, or within 10" of something which the druid wishes to guard or protect. The *liveoak* spell is cast upon a healthy tree of small, medium, or large size according to desire and availability. A "triggering" phrase of up to a maximum of 1 word per level of the druid casting the spell is then placed upon the dweomered oak; for instance, "Attack any who come near without saying 'sacred mistletoe' first" is a 10-word trigger phrase which could be used by a druid of 10th level or higher casting the spell. The *liveoak* triggers the tree into becoming a treant of appropriate size and attack capability, matching the specifications of the Monster Manual, but with only a 3" movement rate. The druid needs his or her mistletoe to cast this spell.

Moonbeam (Evocation-Alteration)

Level: 5
Range: 1"/level
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 1" diameter area (plus special)

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell the druid is able to cause a beam of soft, pale light to strike downward from overhead and illuminate whatever area he or she is pointing at. The light is exactly the same as moonlight, so that colors other than shades of black, gray, and white will not be determinable.

The spell caster can easily cause the *moonbeam* to move to any area he or she can see and point to. This makes the spell an effective way to spotlight something, for example an opponent. While the *moonbeam* allows shadows, a creature centered in a *moonbeam* spell is most certainly under observation. The reflected light from this spell allows dim visual perception 1" beyond the area of effect. The light does not adversely affect infravision, and enhances ultravision to its greatest potential.

The material components are several seeds of any moonseed plant and a piece of opalescent feldspar (moonstone).

Spike Stones (Alteration/Enchantment)

Level: 5
Range: 3"
Duration: 3-12 turns +1
Area of Effect: 1" square/level of caster; 1 spike per 1' sq.

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: The *spike stones* spell causes rock to shape itself into long, sharp points which tend to blend into the background. It is effective on both natural rock and worked stone. The stone spikes serve to impede progress or actually inflict damage. If an area is carefully observed, it is 25% likely per observer that the sharp points of rock will be noticed. Otherwise, those entering the area of effect of the spell will effectively suffer attack by dagger from a druid of the level of the spell caster, immediately upon setting foot in the area and for each step therein thereafter. The initial step will be sufficient to allow the individual to become aware of some problem only if the attack succeeds; otherwise movement will continue until damage occurs. Charging/running victims will suffer 2 attacks per 1" of movement rate over the area of effect after initial damage before being able to halt. Others will suffer but 1 additional attack-like check.

Those falling into pits where *spike stones* are present will suffer 6 such attack-like checks, each made at +2 "to hit" probability for each 10' of distance fallen, and +2 of damage inflicted per 10' distance fallen, spike damage being in addition to falling damage. The material component of the spell is 4 tiny stalactites.

Transmute Water To Dust (Alteration) Reversible

Level: 6
Range: 6"
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 cubic"/level

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8 segments
Saving Throw: None
(& special)

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, the subject area instantly undergoes a change from liquid to powdery dust. Note that if the water is already muddy, the area of effect will be expanded to double normal, while if wet mud is concerned the area of effect will be quadrupled. If water remains in contact with the transmuted dust, the former will quickly permeate the latter, turning the dust into silty mud if a sufficient quantity of water exists to do so, otherwise soaking or dampening the dust accordingly.

Only liquid actually existing in the area of effect at the moment of spell casting is affected. Liquids which are only partially water will be affected insofar as the actual water is concerned. If a living creature is concerned, a saving throw versus magic is required, and only one creature can be the target for such spell usage, regardless of the size of the creature concerned. Failure to save results in the intended victim taking 8-32 points of damage, or twice this much vs. creatures from the Elemental Plane of Water. The reverse of the spell is simply a very high-powered *create water* spell which requires dust as a component.

Either usage requires diamond dust of at least 500 g.p. value, and a bit of seashell, as well as the druid's sprig of mistletoe.

Changestaff (Evocation-Enchantment)

Level: 7
Range: Touch
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: The druid's staff

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3 segments
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell the druid is able to change his or her staff from a pole of dead wood into a

treant of largest size. In order to cast the dweomer, the druid must first have located a tree struck by lightning within the past 24 hours. He or she must then select a sound limb, remove it from the tree, and prepare a specially cured section. This section must be shaped and carved so as to be ready to accept the magic which the druid will then place upon it. The staff must be of ash, oak, or yew wood. Curing by sun drying and special smoke requires 28 days. Shaping, carving, smoothing, and polishing requires another 28 days. The finished staff, showing scenes of woodland life, is then rubbed with the juice of holly berries, and the end of it is thrust into the earth of the druid's grove while he or she then *speaks with plants*, calling upon the staff to assist in time of need. The item is then charged with a dweomer which will last for many changes from staff to treant and back again.

While the staff/treant will initially be of largest size and greatest number of hit points, each 8 points of damage it accumulates actually reduces it by 1 hit die. The staff begins at 12 hit dice and 96 hit points, goes to 11 and 88, 10 and 80, 9 and 72, etc. As it loses hit dice, it becomes smaller in size, thus losing attack power as well. If and when the staff/treant is brought below 7 hit dice, the thing crumbles to sawdust-like powder and is lost. The staff cannot ever be brought upwards in dice or hit points, except by a *wish*. Of course, a new staff can always be sought out, seasoned, and so forth, to begin the process anew.

When the druid plants the end of the staff in the ground and speaks a special command prayer and invocation, the staff turns into a treant. It can and will defend the druid, or obey him or her in any way it can. However, it is by no means a true treant, and it cannot converse with actual treants. The transformation lasts for as many turns as the druid has levels of experience,

until the druid commands the thing to return to its true form, or until the thing is destroyed, whichever first occurs.

In order to *changestaff*, the caster must have either mistletoe or leaves (ash, oak, or yew) of the same sort as the staff.

Sunray (Evocation-Alteration)

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Level: 7 | Components: V, S, M |
| Range: 1"/level | Casting Time: 3 segments |
| Duration: 1 round | Saving Throw: Special |
| Area of Effect: 1" diameter area (plus special) | |

Explanation/Description: When a *sunray* spell is cast, the druid evokes a burning beam of light which is similar to a ray of actual sunlight in all important aspects. It inflicts blindness for 1-3 rounds upon all creatures within its area of effect unless a successful saving throw versus magic is made. Creatures using ultravision at the time will be blinded for 2-8 rounds. Those within its area of effect, as well as creatures within 2" of its perimeter, will have no infravision capabilities for 2-5 rounds. Undead caught within its main area of effect must save versus magic or else take 8-48 points of damage, half damage if a save is made. Those within the secondary area of effect (up to 2" from the perimeter) must save to avoid taking 3-18 points of damage; no damage if this save is made. The ultraviolet light generated by the spell will inflict similar damage on fungoid creatures and subterranean fungi as well, just as if they were undead, but no saving throw is possible.

The material components are an aster seed and a piece of aventurine feldspar (sunstone).

The way things are and the way they will be

Soon I hope to have my new cleric spells ready for your review. As with druid spells, these new offerings will be in addition to the material already presented by Len Lakofka.

It is also necessary for me to say yet more about my creative work — or lack of it. Most of this Learned Audience is aware that I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of TSR Hobbies, Inc. The corporation is the largest, by far, in the Adventure Gaming industry. In our current fiscal year, we should gross over 30 million dollars in sales. We employ more than 250 persons in the United States. TSR is growing, expanding, and diversifying.

The growth and success of the corporation over the past few years has been remarkable — but we are by no means ready to sit back and rest on our laurels! In fact, there are so many new things coming that we expect to go far beyond each previous year for many years to come. All of this requires great effort on the part of each and every one of TSR's employees. Most of my time is required for such work. Planning and management take up the bulk of my week, and I must squeeze out a few off hours in the evenings and on weekends to do things like magazine articles. My design work has by no means been abandoned, but it has been relegated to a position of lesser priority — the last priority at this moment.

Pending work which will eventually be done includes the *Temple of Elemental Evil* (formerly designated as module T2 but which will be released as WG 2, part 1 and 2), the *Maze of Xaene*, with Rob Kuntz and Eric Shook (two parts also), the new material for the AD&D™ game system, and various and sundry other modules and playing aids which are in one or another stage of planning or development. The exact order of material is impossible to predict, for expediency always dictates which project I work on. If I have three days of "free" time, a project which will fill that amount of time will be selected. I need at least two weeks to ready the first portion of the *Temple of Elemental Evil* for print, and about three weeks to finish the second portion. That time might come up in a few days, or not for many months. I apologize for the delay, but please bear with me. It is

necessary that I place the overall needs of TSR and its many employees above design work — even though I prefer to do it and there is tremendous demand for the promised work. Well, enough of that, and thanks for your understanding!

It might interest some of you to learn that we now have a number of D&D® game products translated into French. A full-time translator has been placed on the staff, and we expect to have a large number of games and accessories in French within the next few years. The next steps we will take will be in the areas of German and Japanese language game translations. The ranks of fantasy game enthusiasts will certainly expand when such translations are generally available.

Don't believe everything you read

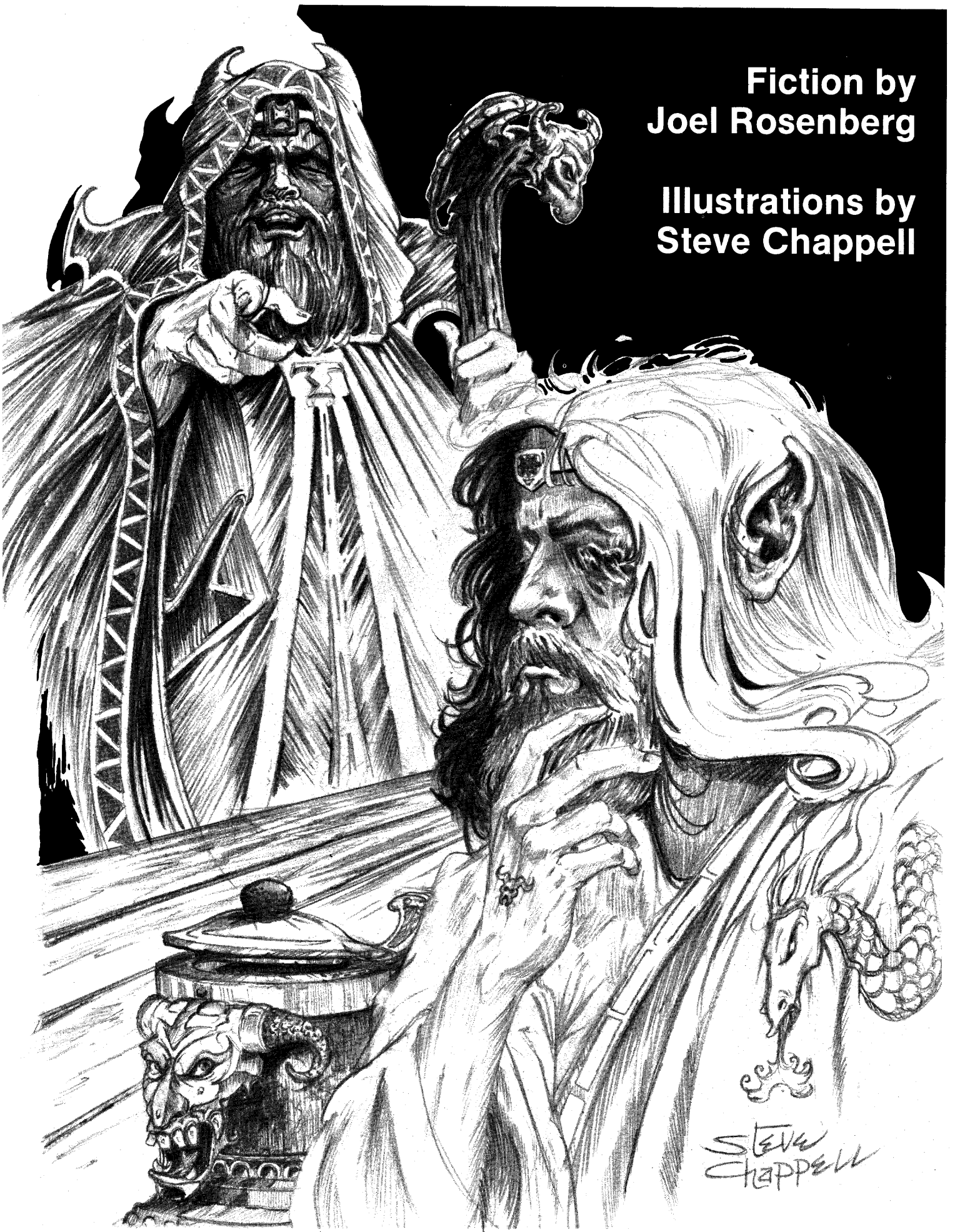
As an added note, Gentle Readers, we still have difficulties with a world of misinformation being given by other publications in the field. A most amusing one recently appeared which stated that TSR was still continuing to hire personnel even though our sales were 30% under those of the previous year.

Most of that statement is correct. There is only one minor flaw — or is it so minor?! TSR is seeking good people in virtually every area of its activities. The company is growing and expanding. However, our sales were *not* 30% under last year's. Our growth was 30% under what we projected: That is, instead of doubling in size this year, it is likely that we will only increase by approximately 170%. Considering the economy, that is, in fact, amazing growth.

The reason I bring this up is to call your attention to the foolishness of gossip columns. Rather than having information of this nature bandied about, I ask readers to do this: If you have questions about *anything* which pertains to TSR Hobbies, Inc., just drop us a line. While I can't guarantee that we'll answer every question, we certainly will make an attempt to cover those points which are of great interest, or those questions which are most frequently asked. We don't tell everything, but we certainly are more open than any other company I know about. We can't reveal information regarding new products and secret projects, but we can tell you just about everything else. ☿

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The Blink of a Wizard's Eye

To put it simply, Lohim and Cipher were wizards.

No, that's too simple — try it this way: Each was gifted by heredity and environment with a specific and peculiar ability to control events in a way normal humans never could seem to understand.

Had they lived in our time, Lohim might well have gotten himself a job with Bell Labs, because wizards like to know how things work; Cipher, most likely, would have become an incompetent politician — a politician because wizards like to control things; incompetent because, by their nature, they can't lie. But . . . their time was long before Bell Labs, and politics was an inherited profession back then, several thousand years ago.

Neither occupation was open to Lohim, a blacksmith's son, or Cipher, an orphan who had been half-adopted, half-enslaved by a shepherd.

Even in their time (call it the Age of Magic, but don't be certain to know what the label means), their time was unusual. If ever there had been a time before then when more than one wizard lived, no record of it existed, and it certainly hadn't lasted long: Disagreements with or among wizards tend to be resolved quickly and finally.

And wizards tend to disagree.

But, since these two wizards were alone and in close proximity (the other patrons of the dark and musty tavern, remembering only part of what they should have about wizards, had fled the premises), the intertwined issues of who was more powerful and the division of territory — if there was any to divide — were moot. For the time being.

Instead of trying to roast, age, petrify, or drown each other, they ate, they drank, and they talked.

"*Blast it!*" Lohim spat, pushing his plate away. (Half the galaxy away, his vehemence caused a small blue-white star to explode, dying in a blaze of expanding gases; the light would not be seen on Earth for millenia.) "I wish you'd try to focus your spells more carefully — that one I deflected yesterday petrified the Old Forest."

Lohim sighed. As usual, he had eaten too much, too fast. His tattered black robes barely covered his oversized belly. He leaned back and took another pull from his tankard. The overflow of bitter ale ran into his sparse black beard. He ignored it; wizards pay little attention to social niceties. "Not that I care about you trying to kill me, understand," he went on, rubbing an arthritic shoulder, "but I grew up just south of there. I used to go up on the roof of my father's smithy at night to watch it in the moonlight. It was beautiful." Lohim crooked a stubby finger at the innkeeper, extending his tankard for a refill.

The innkeeper, who knew a bit about the nature of magic and feared for a beloved brother in a distant country, complied quickly, returning the filled mug to Lohim's still-outstretched hand. He scurried away, wiping at his sweaty brow with a trembling hand.

Cipher smiled, a disturbingly toothy smile. Since wizards can't affect their own appearances, it was strange that Cipher, a man in his middle thirties, looked as young as he did. He even

had all of his own teeth, although he did lack his left eye: a tribute to both wizards' abilities. The rock Lohim "threw" had been intended to hit Cipher directly. Instead, it splintered against a nearby boulder, and one fragment found his eye.

Cipher took a last dainty nibble from the roasted chicken leg he held, daintily, and flipped the gnawed bone toward the unlit hearth behind him. He sat silently for a moment, his head cocked to one side, his single eye vague and unfocused as if he were seeing something far away. Which he was, of course.

"I don't know why you're complaining. It still is beautiful, in a way. The gleam of granite trees, sunlight shining through the translucent stone leaves — very pretty, no? I seem to do some of my best... work... by accident. I guess I'm not as calculating as you are, old man."

Lohim snorted. "Like the time you interfered with my creatures on Akball IV?"

Cipher shrugged. "I could say that I'm sorry, but I thought it would be, well, interesting if I gave them the ability to photosynthesize." Cipher removed a tattered rag from his brown leather sleeve and wiped at his beard-stubbed face, careful only with the scar where his left eye used to be.

"*Interesting?*" Lohim wasn't sure whether to be angry, indignant, or amused. "By the time I noticed what you'd done and removed the chlorophyll from their systems, they were as fat as pigs. Stupid normals hadn't stopped eating, even though you fixed it so they didn't need to — they looked *inflated*."

"I haven't done anything similar since. You've been saying it for years: It's no fun playing god with nonhumans; their minds don't work the same way ours do." He cocked his head to one side again, an amused smile playing across his lips. "Hmm. Seems that some of the locals have remembered our limitations. Do you want to take them, or should I?"

Lohim had been playing with his beard. He found a gray hair among the black ones, grimaced, and pulled it out. Rising, he gathered his robes about him. "Both of us, I should think."

"Fine. What say we make it a contest? Both use. . . kinetic spells?"

Lohim shrugged. "Agreed."

Cipher stood and raised his long arms above his head. He clasped his hands together, closed his lone eye, and wrinkled his face in concentration. As he muttered almost silently, screams of shock and cries of fear reverberated through the cool air of the tavern.

Lohim plodded to the window and ripped away the lightly greased paper that covered it. (He made a mental note to fix it later, when he would be far enough away. After all, the innkeeper had provided tasty food and good ale.) Lohim sighed as he looked out into the dusty street.

There were more than a hundred people outside, mostly adult men in loose cotton shirts and leather trousers, with a leavening of stout women and ragged children. Those in the front of the mob, about a hundred yards distant, were leaning toward the tavern, hands clawing at the air for purchase, finding none. But Cipher's kinetic spell, a spell of movement — of

pushing away — wouldn't be more than a severe annoyance and a temporary setback to the closer normals. Lohim caught himself wishing that they would get past their panic enough to think to fall to the ground and crawl toward the tavern.

He glanced at the other wizard: Good, Cipher was still concentrating and wasn't watching him. As he wiped the small tears from his eyes, Lohim looked away. It wouldn't do for the other to see him in a weak moment, showing some compassion for normal humans.

At the rear of the crowd a huge cloud of dust roiled. Lohim watched a plump woman, one of the last remaining in the rear rank, as she fell backward, a look of stunned terror on her fear-reddened face. As she hit the ground, she was already starting to pick up speed. Shrieking, she slid away faster and faster, her cry tapering down to a distant baritone.

Finally, moments after the boom caused by her body breaking the sound barrier, there was a flash of light, a pillar of fire in the distance as she burned up. The speed of her passage through the air had ignited her like a torch.

The episode was repeated, and repeated. Shortly, the rear half of the crowd was gone.

Cipher, still clasping his hands over his head, opened his single eye and smiled.

"Your turn."

Lohim maneuvered himself down to the floor, crossing his thick legs, seating himself tailor-fashion only with difficulty. He began to sweat, his beady eyes squinting, as he manipulated the trajectories of a score of small meteors several hundred miles overhead, dragging them from their orbits, pulling them down. . . .

One of the peasants shouted, pointing toward the sky. As Lohim concentrated, the remnants of the crowd broke and ran. Lohim shook his head, *tsking*. Normals, faced with an angry wizard, always seemed to forget the *direct* square law that governed magical spells: The farther away a wizard is from an object, the more control he has over it, and vice versa. Logic would have dictated that the normals try to escape Lohim's spell by running toward the tavern, toward Lohim. But logic evaporated quickly in panic — and the mob fled.

Now the rocks were only half a mile up. Lohim, who was capable of playing billiards with distant suns, was just barely able to nudge the meteors now, aiming the jagged swarm at the center of the fleeing crowd.

His eye was accurate. The meteors finished their descent, and the last of the mob vanished in a cloud of smoke and flame. A shock wave rolled through the tavern, rocking its timbers.

Cipher seized his wooden plate and held it beneath the table to keep the dust off his dinner. When the last rumbles died down, he put it back where it belonged, picked up a drumstick, sat down, took a nibble, then drained his tankard.

Lohim sighed. "Stupid normals. If the ones you left alive had just rushed the tavern —"

"How?"

"— *crawling*, if they had to, they could have killed us with no trouble," Lohim said. "I couldn't aim the rocks at myself, could I?" That was a silly question. Of course he *could*, but —

"And of course you would, if it came to that," Cipher snapped. "You wouldn't want company in death."

"Perhaps." Lohim sighed, wiping back tears that could have been from the dust in the air. Or, maybe it was just that he had more empathy for normal humans than the other wizard had; Lohim had been raised by loving normals. "Surely I couldn't count on you to protect me; even if you wanted to —"

"Unlikely." Cipher smiled.

"— you couldn't; we're too close to each other right now." He gestured at Cipher's plate, trying to lift it magically, but only causing it to rattle on the table.

Cipher shrugged. "Well, enough of the normals — and what are you frowning at?"

Lohim stood silently for a moment. "I . . . I've been having some regrets about the way we treat normals, you and I. I don't know . . . maybe it's just that I'm getting old." He gestured



vaguely, as though trying to use his hands to describe the shape of something he'd never seen. "I . . . I just wonder if maybe we could use our abilities to *help* normals, instead of treating them like. . . ." Lohim let his voice trail off; Cipher wasn't listening.

Cipher stood, pounding a small fist on the table. "I've *got* it!" Outside, high in the sky, a bolt of lightning boomed in response. He smiled down at Lohim. "Give me a list of our problems."

Lohim shrugged. "That's easy: aging, mortality, boredom, conflict . . ." He rubbed at his shoulder. "And then there's my arthritis, and your eye. Actually, your empty —"

"Fine." Cipher smiled. "Now, if I can show you the solution to all of our problems — *all* of them — would you admit that I'm the greater of the two of us?"

"Of course — but what are you talking about?"

The slim wizard's smile broadened. "It's simple: cooperation. You can't do anything about your arthritis, just as I can't get my own eye back. But we could do it for *each other* —"

"If we were far enough apart." Lohim nodded. "And —"

Cipher raised a palm. "Take it a step further. I could see that you're properly fed and clothed, and vice versa. We wouldn't have to live on roots and berries most of the time. I don't like the risks of coming into the villages.

"We could do it, Lohim! We've been moving away from each other to fight; we could do it to help each other, too. And as for boredom — like you said, it's no fun playing with nonhumans. And we can't do much with humans, what with having to keep alert, to stay alive. But, if we cooperate, I could enjoy playing with the ones near you. And vice versa."

Cipher cocked his head to one side. "Consider this: If we moved far enough away from each other, we could make each other immortal. How does that strike you?"

"Possible," Lohim answered economically. Deep in thought, he walked over to the huge fireplace, picking up a piece of charred wood from its edge. Ignoring the dirtying of his fingers, he sketched a series of calculations, beginning on the tavern's rear wall.

A wizard has to be able to concentrate; it was more than an hour before Lohim, squatting in a corner — he had scrawled over all of the available space on the four walls of the tavern — stretched his stiff limbs and stood facing Cipher, who had sat motionless, keeping a watchful eye on Lohim's work.

"No, Cipher, it won't work." He stomped a foot. "And *dammit!* Aging is a subtle process, hard to control. You couldn't do anything for me unless we were separated by more than, say, two or three times the planet's diameter." It didn't occur to him to worry about whether or not Cipher would do his best for him; wizards *can't* lie.

"How about a million diameters, a *million* million?" Cipher jumped up. "Let's say you put a protection spell on me, and a kinetic — and I do the same for you. We could get as far away from each other as we wanted. And the more the distance, the more control we would have over what goes on *here* — Lohim, we could be in complete control of the humans. No more playing with aliens." He clasped his hands together. "Just think about it. Please."

Lohim stroked his beard. "It *could* work." He stood. "Will you promise to take care of my safety and comfort, protecting me from all harm and pain?"

Cipher smiled. "Subject to you swearing a similar oath, I do, and with all sincerity." Obviously, he'd considered the possibility of Lohim letting him swear the oath, then simply disposing of him, safe from Cipher's retaliation. "And will you swear to do the same for me?"

"Absolutely and unconditionally," Lohim said solemnly.

"Then what are we waiting for?" they asked simultaneously, then burst into laughter.

Both smiling, the tall, slim, one-eyed wizard, and the heavy, short one walked out into the hot day. Three eyes squinted against the glare. Like a pair of duelists, they stood back to back on the dusty street, muttering similar incantations, waving their hands in like motions, swaying as though to the same rhythm.

Then each seemed to run away from the other; their steps came faster and lighter, the distance between their feet and the ground longer, as the power of their kinetic spells increased with the continually greater separation.

Finally, Lohim tucked his legs under himself like a nesting bird and relaxed. He looked over his shoulder; a dot that must have been Cipher was vanishing in the distance.

By the time Lohim had left the atmosphere, the pain of his arthritis had started to ease; the bloated feeling from his earlier overeating had vanished, never to return.

And his speed continued to increase.

Hours later, as he passed through the heart of the sun, he felt only slightly warmed; Cipher's protection spell was growing stronger with each passing moment, with each added mile between them.

Lohim would never feel pain again. Or be hungry. (For food, that is; but his power would grow, and, as some would observe in later centuries, nothing increases the hunger for power like an increase in power.)

* * *

Over the next months, their velocity, impelled by the increasing efficacy of each other's spells, began to approach the speed of light. Both of the wizards began to have fun playing with, as they put it, a planet and a race of beings that they could enjoy: their own. But as their speed increased, events on the planets behind them seemed to speed up as well; even such powerful wizards aren't immune to the time-dilation effects of near-light speed.

And what contests they had! Just a few hours (from Lohim's point of view; back on Earth, millenia had passed) later, Cipher set up a beautiful battle of his Amalekites against the nomadic tribe that Lohim called the Hapiru. It was a bloody contest; Cipher claimed that he couldn't remember ever having had so much fun before.

Lohim got angry and inflicted the people Cipher called Europeans with a series of plagues, as a way of telling him to lay off; the peace and friendliness between them had been greatly outlived by the permanence of their mutual promises.

Of course, Lohim's ploy didn't work; Cipher retaliated.

At a butterfly's-breath short of the speed of light, they sped further and further, faster and faster from their home world.

The situation on the planet precisely halfway between them got no better; a world is ill served by being the plaything of two wizards.

Once, in between Cipher-protected breaths, Lohim acted on a sudden impulse to set up an independent source of power on Earth, a power that might be able to clean up the mess the two wizards had made. It didn't work; Cipher had anticipated the move, and he turned Lohim's power into the cause, rather than the cure, of wars and persecutions and murders.

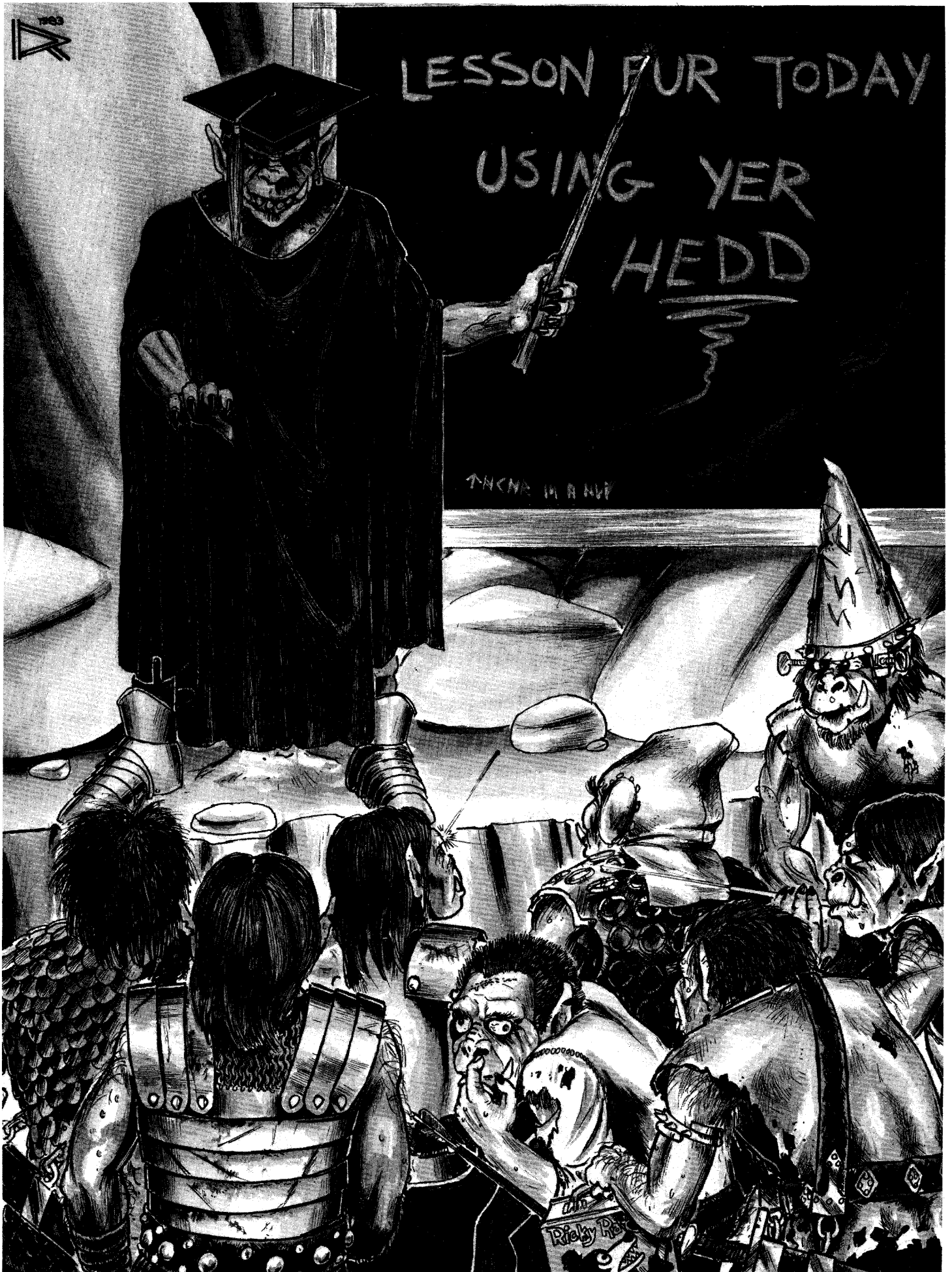
From the two wizards' viewpoints, time continues to speed up, so that neither of them can quite follow what is going on, here on Earth, any more; both are dazzled by the speed at which changes take place.

* * *

The spot where the tavern used to lie is now buried under an accumulation of dirt and rubble, built up over the centuries; the innkeeper and all of his compatriots are long since dead.

But, every once in a while, an aged descendant of theirs will look at a newspaper, or a television set, and marvel at how quickly the world changes. "My stars," the descendant will say, "it seems like just yesterday that the world was a simple, stable place. And now there's been men on the moon, and there's atomic bombs, and computers, and the children aren't getting married anymore — things in this world change so fast, I just can't follow it all."

"Which," Cipher chuckles, years flashing past as he blinks his eye, "puts the gods and man in much the same fix, no?" ☿



Mind of the monster

Give creatures the brains they were born with

by Bruce Humphrey

Monsters may only be supporting actors in the unfolding of events in a role-playing campaign — but the DM and the player characters aren't going to win Oscars for their performances if the supporting cast isn't any good. Handled well, monsters can make an adventure or a campaign unforgettable. Handled poorly, they can drain it of its lifeblood.

Monsters should be treated by the DM with almost as much care as he treats players — perhaps, sometimes, more care. Monsters cannot argue about unfairness or misuse, as players can (and do). The best DM's never lose sight of the fact that monsters are people, too. Like players and player characters, they cannot be ignored or mistreated without this causing serious consequences. A balance must be maintained between players and monsters for a campaign to maintain its challenge.

One of the problem encountered by some player-groups after a number of journeys in a campaign is monster polarity. After a time, creatures become divided into two groups: the slow-witted and the ultra-cunning. The former attack on sight, disregarding all else and slaying until they are slain. The latter seldom endanger themselves, usually setting up elaborate traps in which to snare any possible enemies. In a campaign which is polarized like this, few monsters show evidence of any original thought on the part of the DM, and the result is that the most popular adventures are those which become intricate (and artificial) DM traps. This causes monsters to be relegated to the status of second-class dungeon denizen.

Any DM would find it difficult and tedious to create a special monster for every situation. But effort of that scope is unnecessary anyway; with just a bit of time and thought, a DM can easily add that precious element of uncertainty that makes an adventure more than just an

exercise in monster trashing. If the DM keeps players and their characters guessing, all participants will get more out of the campaign, both in terms of enjoyment and intrigue.

A matter of intelligence

Intelligence is a major consideration in any monster's design, but possibly also the most abused characteristic. Intelligence suffers most from the onset of "monster polarity" in a campaign. The results are supremely stupid, or unbearably cunning, competitors for the players. Both types become predictable and dull after the first few confrontations. Who says that orcs attack mindlessly and to the last "man"? They are undoubtedly smarter than tigers, so why can they not use the same amount of guile (at least)? Even animals flee when confronted by an opponent they sense they cannot defeat — yet orcs and goblins habitually throw themselves headlong into battle.

Intelligence is a reflection of how clearly a creature can understand the world around it. This pertains to facts (only), while decisions involving those facts fall into the realm of wisdom. So, while a creature of low intelligence sees only a man with a sword, a creature of genius-level intelligence will see that man as a seasoned warrior, and will perceive that the sword seems to have a mind of its own. (Yes, magic weapons can be detected in this fashion.) These two minds see the same form, but one perceives it more clearly and more completely. This does not mean that a highly intelligent creature will know as much about the party as the DM does (only a god-like mind would know nearly as much), but it will act on what it does see (or senses in other ways) much more rapidly than a creature of relatively lower intelligence.

The more intelligent a creature is, the

more likely it is to recognize and attempt to neutralize the stronger members of the party.

Conversely, the least intelligent monsters will tend to pick on what they see as the easiest target in the party — either the closest member, or the one who is obviously (sleeping, wounded, being carried, etc.) the least able to protect himself.

A somewhat more intelligent creature (perhaps as high as low/average) will do essentially the same thing, but will be more particular (perhaps realizing that unarmored people — magic-users and thieves — are the most vulnerable).

Above this level of intelligence (*average* or higher), creatures will usually attack stronger (at least, those they think are stronger) party members first, leaving the weaker for later.

Animals will attack the easiest "kill," while ogres will probably take out the less armored types because it is relatively easier (to them) to do so, but even orcs will usually try to drag down the fighters, knowing that doing so makes beating the rest of the group much easier. Something as smart as an efreet will probably hit a magic-user first, since it would see that character as more of a threat, intending to deal with the physically stronger fighters later.

Intelligence determines what a monster will do initially when confronted by a group of players. When surprised, any creature less than *very* intelligent will instinctively flee (at least until, it has a better idea of what it is confronting). In such a case, a creature of *high* intelligence will be able to adjust more quickly after being surprised, and will react more rationally. Rule: Orcs flee, elves react. No creature, unless it is cornered or otherwise forced to fight, is likely to fight an unknown enemy, and will probably flee at first opportunity.

In a situation where monster surprise

is not a factor, creatures will usually observe an enemy before they decide whether to attack or not. This axiom applies to all intelligent creatures, including those of *animal* intelligence. Lions will stalk their prey, as will kobolds, given half a chance. As higher intelligences are considered, the time needed for observation decreases, until a creature of *genius* intelligence needs but a moment to evaluate a situation. But no creature attacks on sight — except maybe player characters.

Recognizing magic and men

A monster's ability to recognize magic use and magic items varies with intelligence. Creatures of low intelligence recognize magic only in its most overt forms — glowing weapons and other items that have strange effects.

Animals, and others of *animal* intelligence, will not recognize magic at all, reacting only to the effects (bright light, fire, etc.); thus, they cannot use magic, since they simply do not understand what it is.

Creatures of *average* intelligence will suspect magic more often than they actually encounter it — knowing that there is magic in the world, they "see" it everywhere — and so will blame magic even for mundane events. Goblins, for example, blame natural events on magic, as do many simple humans.

Somewhat brighter creatures recognize the signs of the magic-user (no armor, few weapons, odd items) and can act accordingly upon such signals. The most clever of creatures will be able to perceive magic items simply by noting how party members hold or protect them. For example, while a mantichore sees a man with a stick in one hand and a twig in another, an average dwarf may see a magic-user with a staff and a wand, while a ki-rin sees a low-level magic-user with a (mundane) walking stick and a wand which he seems rather proud of — probably something fairly powerful.

A monster's ability to determine the character classes of party members is dependent on intelligence. A creature of *low* intelligence sees "man," one of *average* sees "cleric," while one of *genius* intelligence sees "high level cleric with a magic staff." A monster's understanding and interpretation of what it sees will affect how the creature reacts to the group, as well as affecting its decision on who it will attack first, should it do so.

Other effects of intelligence

In a creature's bargaining with groups, intelligence is the factor which influences all others. Knowledge tells a creature when it is possible to deal, how good a deal is, and with whom it should deal. The most stupid creatures may either not bargain at all, or "chaotically" make a

deal which is ridiculously simple — or difficult — for the party to meet. Such creatures may feel like a snack, and will ask for something to eat as plain as ordinary food, or as absurd as three group members. The more intelligent a being is, the more likely it can determine just what the limits are on any deals it can make. Likewise, only the most dull-witted creature will deal in good faith with an evil chaotic, or expect such response from others if the creature itself is an evil chaotic. (Gollum and the riddle-game is an example that leaps to mind.)

Another characteristic of monsters that corresponds to intelligence is how well a creature can use its natural abilities. Obviously, DMs should keep in mind that all creatures can use those abilities mentioned in the Monster Manual to full effect. Demons' spells and abilities are always ready at hand, and should be clear in the DM's mind; the same goes for the djinni and efreeti, and any other creatures with special abilities. This does not mean that creatures will always use their abilities to best effect, however. A DM should be ready to employ any special abilities, but always in a "natural" manner — dependent on the monster's intelligence. For example, a fairly bright red dragon is likely to save its breath weapon for the more vital use than the odd halfling who wanders into its lair. Similarly, a dim-witted type IV demon may be less likely to gate in other demons, because of overconfidence or fear of appearing to be weak to others of its kind, than would a smarter one who decides that help may be welcome or more expedient in eliminating the party. The average troll is unlikely to use a weapon, but a genius of its race just might have the presence of mind to start swinging with that magical sword, or wear that "cloak of protection from fire." It's all in the brain, so who can tell when the party might meet up with the Rhodes Scholar of otyughs?

Another effect of intellect on the average monster is evidenced in how it prepares its lair. A less intelligent minotaur who does not want to be disturbed may spread havoc in the area around its home in hopes of scaring off intruders (which has, of course, the opposite effect on player characters). The considerably smarter mind flayer, however, will probably conceal its lair and take care of trespassers quietly.

The latest in lair decor

What's "in" in interior design for the fashionable monster who hopes to live to terrorize its next village? Here are several rules of thumb:

Any creature of at least measurable intelligence will have an emergency exit in its cave/den/lair. Even animals are smart enough to do this — why not a dragon? This escape hatch may be anything from a simple hidden tunnel to a



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Creatures of average or higher intelligence will place a trap or two along the approach(es) to their lairs. These may be outside the tunnels proper, or they may involve traps or mazes within the lair itself. Such traps will not be constructed so cleverly that the creature itself cannot pass them — if it is smart enough to create traps, it is smart enough not to trap itself in. Particularly involved traps will usually be constructed in blind side tunnels, so the creature won't have to worry about stumbling upon one of them.

Smarter creatures will probably have counter-measures in their lairs to compensate for any weakness they might have. Michelangelo Troll may reside in a particularly damp cave, or even one with a pool, to lessen the threat of fire-using invaders. Vinnie Vampire's crypt may have a permanent *darkness* spell permeating it, to counteract clerical light. A pet rust monster, pressed into service when plate-armored fighters invade, no doubt has been the salvation of many creatures bright enough to know their usefulness.

Any creature, no matter how stupid, will provide itself with some method of obtaining food: If it cannot get food to come to it, it will have to get to the food. By this reasoning, a dragon will seldom inhabit a dungeon, unless there is a usable escape tunnel out, or it is reliably provided with food by a third party.

And finally, if the creature is a food-gatherer, any pets or guards it uses will usually not be of any type that might threaten its source of food. If a creature is smart enough to have guards or pets, it is bright enough to know the consequences of a poor choice.

Personality doesn't go by the book

The personality of a particular creature depends a lot on a monster's or NPC's mental faculties, and is somewhat shaped by the creature's alignment — but well-developed monsters have distinctiveness above and beyond these characteristics. The personality of a creature also includes the ways in which a DM breathes life into that individual monster or NPC — making it different from the standard "book variety" version of that monster.

For purposes of definition, a creature's personality is considered to be the way in which its intelligence and wisdom mesh to form its particular outlook on life and modes of living. Personality affects what goals a monster might have, as well as helping to describe quirks in its nature.

A monster's personality usually helps determines the circumstances under which it will meet the party, and will certainly also affect what it does when an encounter takes place. The presence or absence of caution on the monster's

part, favored residences it might prefer to inhabit, and quirks of "character" are all monster characteristics that can affect how, when, and where the players will encounter that creature or creature type.

Adjusting a monster's goals based on its personality may take some thought on the part of the DM, even after the nature of the creature's personality has been decided or determined. But the payoff for such work will be "one of a kind" encounters for the players — because no two monsters will ever be *exactly* the same.

To determine the nature of a monster's personality, the "Personae of Non-player Characters" section of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* is very helpful. Consider the "quirks" therein, which can be chosen or generated randomly to assign to monsters and NPCs alike. If a monster has paranoia, it might attack on sight — even if the intruder is of the same race. If a creature is formidable and greedy, but faint-hearted, it may ask for a bribe in return for not attacking the party. A dragon hungry for wealth and power (beyond that which is normal for dragons) may try to take over an area and demand tribute and deference on the part of the other inhabitants. A lazy but vengeful NPC magic-user might not pursue a group himself, but would rather hire assassins or just put a price on the heads of his enemies.

Especially in a large-scale, wide-scope campaign, it's probably not worth it to make every monster different; just put a little variety into the overall mix, so the flavor of your world is one where the monsters live, not just reside. Assigning distinctive personalities to even just some monsters tells players that they can no longer afford to treat *any* monster as typical, or similar to another. Players will learn — sometimes the hard way — that the beings in your world are individuals, and they will enjoy the challenges this offers them.

Below are offered some suggestions for "quirks." The use of these particular personality traits should be relatively limited, since most of them are *major* personality twists. They are described here as examples of what can be done in the extreme to change a monster according to its personality:

1. A creature who prefers eating to any other activity, and may also be greedy for wealth. (Such a creature would probably be grossly overweight.) Dealing with a demon with such preferences, for instance, would certainly be interesting, particularly if it decided that a member of the adventuring group suited its "tastes."

2. Creatures prejudiced against certain other creatures, above and beyond the racial preferences lists given in the rules. This prejudice could take the form of anything from simple disdain to active hatred, and might produce an encounter

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result totally unexpected by the party members.

3. Creatures who have a phobia. Fear of silver in any form would be common among werewolves and other monster types susceptible to silvered weapons. Trolls would probably have a phobia involving fire, considering their situation. But these are obvious and common. What happens when a group meets a griffon with hydrophobia (fear of water), or a cleric with a fear of flying, or a demon afraid of the dark (nyctophobia)?

4. A creature who hoards "odd" materials (books, artwork, etc.) in preference to monetary wealth or valuables that could be used for cash (gems, jewelry, etc.), or who actually prefers "money" of lesser value over higher denominations. All such hoarded items will invariably have some significant monetary value — no boot collectors or beer-can hoarders — but will be of much greater intrinsic value to the creature than their monetary worth might indicate. A rather odd dragon, for example, may prefer items of copper above all other wealth, and be willing to trade gold or magic items for the group's "collection" of copper pieces.

5. Catatonic creatures may seem like statues, or under some spell, unless disturbed, at which point they attack in a berserk manner.

Goals, ambitions, and motivations

Just like player characters, monsters have certain goals and ambitions, as well as everyday needs. Most of these goals, wants, and needs would be recognizable as some form of human drive — but monsters are not human (seldom even humanoid), and cannot be treated by the DM as if they were. Creatures in the AD&D world are products of strange environments, backgrounds, and genetics, and must be played vastly different from human(oid)s.

In some aspects of life, monsters are similar to humans. However, their ideas of what is comfortable, pleasant, and/or beautiful are at odds with our own. Some monsters are born with specific tendencies toward good, evil, law, or chaos. Some enjoy (and even require) living in filth. Others think that murder, mayhem, and destruction are wonderful occupations, and they cannot be convinced otherwise. Others will find joy and beauty in what we consider ugliness. It is this difference in viewpoint which the DM must always be aware of in order to decide how a certain creature will react to any given situation.

Think of what *life* is like, for instance, for a vampire. What would it find interesting, especially since it is undead and therefore (potentially) immortal? One can hardly sleep forever in one's crypt, no matter how homey it may be. Didn't it seem as though Dracula enjoyed those mental duels with his pursuers in old London? In a similar vein, an AD&D

vampire's boredom could easily be relieved by any passing group. The challenge to a vampire would be in misleading the group, and tempting his own destruction — or at least endangering himself — before artfully destroying them. On perhaps a lesser scale, the same thought holds for dragons, since the only opportunity for them to relieve the tedium of hoard-guarding would be in elegantly outwitting potential robbers. Typically, all creatures of relatively high intelligence will be on the lookout for ways to make life interesting and occupy their time.

Less intelligent creatures do things in their spare (non-fighting) time, too. Often their activity at such times is a search for some necessity: food, home, or a mate. If such a being finds time on its hands (claws?) once it has gathered the necessities of life, it would probably then set about prowling the neighborhood. (Curiosity seems to be a common trait among animals and creatures of low intelligence.) A group of adventurers could meet such a creature as a wandering monster at either time — when it is gathering food (or whatever), or when it's out for a snoopy stroll.

Most of the time, an undeveloped monster's motivations and goals are only made vaguely known, if at all. For instance, why do dragons hoard treasure? For pure greed, or for status among their fellows, or because they like lumpy beds? Why are sphinxes interested in riddles? Why do unicorns care about treasure? This sort of question is one that every DM must ask and answer individually.

Deciding how to play the appeasement of monsters, reflecting the goals and desires of each creature type, is often a problem for both players and DMs. What is proper to offer a lamia, for example, as a bribe or a payment for some service — and what might she consider acceptable? General guidelines might read like this: Creatures of lower intelligence want food, and will often be satisfied by something that will fill their tummies. Those of somewhat higher intelligence may also want a mate, or companionship of some type, as preferred compensation. As a monster's intelligence increases, so does its interest in wealth and security. ("Will it pay me to take their money, let these guys go, and have them advertising my lair?") Rising still higher on the intelligence scale are those monsters with desires for power and magic.

One motivation common to all monsters (and characters as well), except those of the lowest intelligence, is revenge — which can take a multitude of different forms.

Environment and enemies

Individualizing monsters is the best way to make each of them unusual and realistic — but a DM must be careful not

to go too far in this direction, ignoring the general characteristics of a creature type that also help shape that creature's actions. Consider a creature's environment and its biological or psychological nature and ask: What is common to all creatures of this type? In this regard, the *Monster Manual* is particularly helpful because of its descriptions of behavior. To augment those guidelines, here are other ideas:

A creature living in a particular climate or environment will have certain natural enemies. A troll's enemies might be salamanders; a lammasu's foremost adversaries might be manticores. Any time two creature types may be competitors, they will probably be enemies as well.

Living a life in one environment tends to cause fear of, or discomfort in, another. Thus, cave-dwellers may not actually fear light, but its brightness makes them uncomfortable. Many winged types will have claustrophobia and probably a fear of darkness, since flying is hazardous in cramped spaces or in the absence of light. A bullette may not like crossing rocky ground, since it is a burrowing creature and would be unable to flee in its accustomed manner if attacked on that terrain.

Weaker hunting-type monsters will be correspondingly more cunning, or will usually mass in large numbers (kobolds and orcs are examples). Also, such types will be more dangerous in their lairs, since they are more likely to prepare traps in order to survive in a world of stronger enemies.

Most monsters are not solitary creatures, and those that are able and willing will form some sort of society. The natural alignment of a creature type comes into play here, since few monsters of chaotic alignment can cooperate to the extent of forming a solid, stable society. This is a rationale, in AD&D game terms, for how those of lawful good alignment can survive and persevere against the more numerous and more powerful chaotic and evil types — the "good guys" tend to band together, finding strength and safety in cooperation. A society of vampires, though an interesting thought, would be very fragile — held together only by the most important of their common goals.

By keeping "the mind of the monster" in mind, a DM can make every adventure more fun and more fulfilling. The creation of monsters with challenging personalities gives the DM a proper measure of control over — and a greater responsibility for — what happens in his or her world. From this effort, the players receive a greater feeling of involvement and satisfaction when they defeat not "just another monster," but an *individual*. And if the player characters are defeated instead, then at least they have been beaten by a worthy opponent, not a "paper golem" with no mind of its own. ☿

GREYHAWK'S WORLD.

When our editors were going over the manuscript for *The Land Beyond The Magic Mirror* (module GC S8/X2), the question arose: Just who were Murlynd, Keoghtom, and Heward? I replied that they were "personages" — above the status of important characters, by and large, but not quite demi-gods and certainly not heroes. They are, in fact, *quasi-deities*, and I have named them such forevermore! In Greyhawk's World there are quite a number of such, but only Heward, Keoghtom, and Murlynd are currently placed so as to interact with player characters. The inactive list includes Daern, Johydee, Nolzur, Quaal, and Tuerny. Characters of personage status such as Bucknard (NPC), Mordenkainen (my own), Otiluke (NPC), and Tenser (PC), to name but a few, are not as powerful and broadly endowed as are the quasi-deities.

Because "retired" characters will occasionally come into play, and the action can lead to more experience and power, I am presenting the three active quasi-deities of Greyhawk's World for DM and player alike to inspect and assess. At least one was once actually a player character, by the way. Using these three as guidelines, it should not prove too difficult for the DM to act to bring very special "retired" player characters, and possibly some of your most successful NPCs too, into the realm of the quasi-deity. By means of dual-class work, special situations, successful questests, and the completion of defined tasks, the former PCs can be elevated to the new status.

It is very important that quasi-deities be kept in tight control by the DM. Even though they might have once been the characters of game participants, their exalted status now moves them to different realms. Until such time as the campaign has developed sufficiently to allow the free interaction of characters of such power, the DM must control quasi-deities, just as other deities and their ilk are the province of the DM.

All that said, here are Heward, Keoghtom, and Murlynd. Because the personages of Mordenkainen, Bucknard, *et al*, are actively used or played in my campaign, I cannot give details of their power

and possessions. Suffice it to say that their status is something less than that of the quasi-deities. As usual, if you have pertinent comments, please pass them on to me. I probably will not be able to reply, but all such information is noted and might well affect the course of the further development of the AD&D™ game system!

HEWARD

(Quasi-Deity)

ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 15"
HIT POINTS: 96
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
SIZE: *M (6' tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (good)*
WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *n/a*
SYMBOL: *n/a*
PLANE: *Prime Material (principally)*
CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*
FIGHTER/PALADIN/RANGER: *Nil*
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *10th level in each*
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*
MONK: *Nil*
BARD: *20th level*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/nil*
S:18 I:20 W:8
D:17 C:18 CH:11 CO:11

Heward is of indeterminate age, appearing both young and old at the same time. He is athletic and strong, quick and lively. Although his pate is bald, Heward has a luxurious moustache and small beard of sandy brown. His forehead is wrinkled, but his cheeks are rosy and fresh. Heward always wears shabby garb or finery which is old and out of fashion (thus actually creating a style all his own, and a quite remarkable one at that). Although distinctive, Heward has the

power to be quite unnoticeable when he so desires, simply by willing it; no magic aura betrays this anonymity.

Because of his non-aggressive philosophy, Heward seldom carries any major weapon. Usually he will have only a +3 *hornblade* knife and possibly a *magic quarterstaff* +6. He is able to use any weapon permitted to magic-users, bards,



or illusionists without non-proficiency penalty, but Heward dislikes so doing, for he favors passive defense unless severely threatened.

Similarly, Heward is uncomfortable with protective devices, although he does employ a special herbal mix which bestows an armor class of 0 to his body; this, coupled with his dexterity, gives him his usual AC -3 rating. In addition, Heward possesses a +3 "*luckstone*" which gives the usual benefits on dice rolls.

In addition to his magical powers, Heward is able to employ any standard musical instrument to enhance his bard skill. Obvious exceptions are single-note

BY
E. GARY GYGAX

horns and drums, but other instruments of brass, percussion, or woodwind classification are included with the typical stringed instruments of bardic nature.

Heward's magical resistance is of the uniform sort, applicable evenly to all sorts of spells. Heward understands the arcane art of technology, and is particularly adept with mechanical items. His domicile is reputed to have many devices of occult nature — engines, clock-works, and other sorts of incomprehensible things. These devices, as well as golem-machines, are said to serve in many ways in his strange stronghold.

The domicile of Heward is nondescript on the exterior. It extends into many extra-dimensional spaces, so its interior actually contains all manner of rooms and spaces — from cramped lofts to a grand auditorium with a great organum, including open gardens and spacious parks. This domicile is a nexus which touches parallel worlds, many planes, and the dimension of time.

Heward will always have various pitch pipes and tuning forks with him. The powers of these instruments are basically twofold: One will provide defensive magical effects, the other is for movement to other planes. By using any two or more in combination, he is able to create music of bardic sort which can charm and cast various druid-type spells.

Although Heward is most probably encountered alone, there is a 20% chance he will be in company with 1 (80%) or 2-3 of the following: Celestian (DRAGON #68), Fharlanghn (#68), Zagyg (#69), Keoghtom, Mordenkainen, and Murlynd.

KEOGHTOM

(Quasi-Deity)

ARMOR CLASS: -8

MOVE: 24"

HIT POINTS: 77

NO. OF ATTACKS: 4

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 77%

SIZE: *M (5½' tall)*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (good)*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *n/a*

SYMBOL: *n/a*

PLANE: *See below*

CLERIC/DRUID: *14th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *18th level/16th level*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*

MONK: *10th level*

BARD: *20th level*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/nil*

S:12 I:19 W:18

D:20 C:15 CH:16 CO:13

Keoghtom appears as a young, slightly

built man, typically arrayed in green garb of elven sort or else resplendent in silken finery. Of course, he can use magic to alter his appearance, but he seldom does so.

Being quick of movement and deadly of aim, Keoghtom usually bears a short bow and a short sword. He is adept with both and has the following bonuses "to hit" and damage:

| | Dexterity | Expertise | Total |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Short bow ¹ | +3/- | +2/+2 | +5/+2 ¹ |
| Short sword | — | +2/+4 | +2/+4 |

¹ — Bonus applies at all ranges,

and damage is doubled at point blank and short range.

Although Keoghtom does not use spells as a deity does, he is not subject to the usual restrictions of class, either. He is able to use weapons, spells, and various abilities of professional sort in complete freedom. Thus, Keoghtom combines the abilities of many classes, and he can employ whatever weapon suits him without incurring a non-proficiency penalty. Likewise, any sort of

armor can be worn, although Keoghtom typically wears magical bracers (AC 2), a cloak of *blending* and *displacement*, and a *ring of protection* +4. (This gives him AC -4 without dexterity bonus, AC -8 when dexterity is included.)

It need not be said that Keoghtom knows virtually all spells, and in addition he has several unique to himself.

One of the major powers of Keoghtom is his uniform magic resistance. That is, the 77% applies to all spells, whether cast by a 1st level individual, an arch-mage, or some deity.

Keoghtom seldom, if ever, sets foot on the Prime Material Plane, although he once dwelled there. He now roams the Astral and similar planes or visits those extra-dimensional planes which are the homes of certain of his associates, such as Murlynd. Keoghtom is also on good terms with such deities as Celestian and Zagyg, and will occasionally be found in their company.

The number of usual and special magic items and devices possessed by Keoghtom is vast. He will usually be equipped with the following items, in addition to those mentioned previously: +3 *arrows*, *arrows of slaying*, a +5 *sword*, a magic ring, a magic rod or staff, a device for planar travel, a device to warn of danger, a device to hold many spells, and a device to speak and read many tongues. Since Keoghtom is basically non-hostile, these items he carries are usually used for self-protection or beneficial reasons. Keoghtom does not initiate aggression, although he is not loath to answer in kind if attacked.

Those persons particularly interested in associations and relationships have noted the following interrelationships between Keoghtom and certain others: Zagyg and Keoghtom are great friends, as are Keoghtom and Murlynd. Zagyg is related to Heward by some distant kinship, and Heward and the arch-mage Mordenkainen are likewise kin. Heward often visits Mordenkainen, who, in turn, is known to be close to both Keoghtom and Murlynd. Celestian is an associate of Keoghtom and is on good terms with Zagyg.

This set of relationships yields the following possible groupings involving Keoghtom:

Zagy & Keoghtom

Keoghtom & Murlynd

Zagy, Keoghtom, & Murlynd

Keoghtom, Murlynd, & Mordenkainen

Zagy, Keoghtom, & Mordenkainen

Keoghtom, Heward, & Mordenkainen

Zagy, Keoghtom, & Heward

Celestian & Keoghtom

Celestian, Keoghtom, & Murlynd

Celestian, Zagyg, & Keoghtom

If one assumed that Keoghtom would be encountered alone half of the time, group encounters fill the balance, with accompanying deities being less likely than other associate groups.



MURLYND

(Quasi-Deity)

ARMOR CLASS: -2
 MOVE: 12"
 HIT POINTS: 135
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 (both hands)
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%
 SIZE: M (6' tall)
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful (good)*
 WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *n/a*
 SYMBOL: *n/a*
 PLANE: *Special; see below*
 CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*
 FIGHTER: *12th level paladin*
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *12th level*
 in each (see below)
 THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*
 MONK: *Nil*
 BARD: *Nil*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *I or VI*
 Attack/Defense Modes: All/all
 S:18/76 I:18 W:15
 D:16 C:18 CH:14 CO:17

Murlynd is a true character. His face is bold and handsome, his eyes deep and penetrating. His nature is seemingly rugged, independent, taciturn. His broad, muscular frame is typically clad in garments of another time and world, that of the "Old West." His waist is girdled by a leather belt containing weapons of technology as well as a +6 dagger. Although appearing aloof and aggressive, Murlynd is actually quite gregarious, loquacious, and gentle . . . unless provoked.

As noted, Murlynd is prone to carry technological weapons (variously called "45s", "six shooters", and "hog legs") which he is able to employ in both his left and right hands. His special aura enables these devices to function even on Oerth, for instance. Each weapon sends forth three missiles per round, if he so desires. These projectiles will strike even the most powerful of magical creatures and inflict 2-8 points of damage when they hit. The range of these arcane weapons is the same as the range of a light crossbow. Murlynd has a +4 *dancing holy sword* (broadsword) which he usually carries on his warhorse or strapped on his back. He is able to use a weapon in either hand, so in combat Murlynd might use his arcane projectile weapons one round, then draw sword and dagger, and eventually cast a spell or use some other device while his broadsword "dances."

Murlynd's basic magic resistance is of the uniform sort which applies equally to spells or spell-like powers used by anyone from a 1st level character to a deity.

When casting spells, Murlynd is prone to intermix technological terminology with his incantations, sometimes with surprising results. Thus, in casting a



stinking cloud or *wall of fog* spell he might conjure into being a strange engine which gushes forth the desired result, but for far longer and over a greater area than desired. He is known to have cast *burning hands* in such a way that he made a device which spewed forth liquid fire — but at another time he conjured a *fireball* of paper which burst harmlessly. Because he is insensitive to differences in hue, Murlynd's spells which are color-based or color/employing in nature are often quite bizarre in effect, and are known to be linked with technological devices which send forth the hues. Because of this technological admixture, it is sometimes possible for Murlynd to cast more than one spell in a round, since the initial *dweomer* is provided, in part, by the art of science!

Because of his dabbling in science and technology, Murlynd is often unsure of his psionic abilities. Therefore, there is a 50% likelihood that he will be unable to use his abilities when he might want to call on them. But when in this condition, he is immune to psionic attacks from others. When he is able to employ them, Murlynd has the following psionic disciplines: *animal telepathy, clairvoyance, hypnosis, molecular agitation, object reading, precognition, sensitivity to psychic impressions, aura alteration, dimension walk, energy control (fire), ethe-*

realness, probability travel, shape alteration, and telekinesis. He uses minor powers at 12th level, major ones at 10th level.

Since he is rather unusual, and because he dabbles in questionable areas, Murlynd is generally unpopular with those of his sort. He is, in fact, shunned by most. His abode is divided between several special dwellings on various planes or extra-dimensional areas. He moves about from place to place on a whim, staying for days or years as suits his mood.

Murlynd is alone about 60% of the time. At other times, he will be in the company of 1 or more of the following: Heironeous (DRAGON #67), Heward, Keoghtom, Mordenkainen, and Zagyg.



The next example is that of a quasi-deity taken one step further along the road to greater power — demi-deityhood. This example, Kelanen, happens to be one which I devised (with assistance from Francois Marcela-Froideval). It demonstrates, however, the principle of advancement of power. The devotion and single-purpose nature of Kelanen is likewise a good model for player characters who desire to develop a "cause" and direct their power along a single path.

KELANEN

Hero-Deity —
"The Prince of Swords"

ARMOR CLASS: -5
 MOVE: 18"
 HIT POINTS: 159
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By sword type (and see below)*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%
 SIZE: M (6' tall)
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Any*
 SYMBOL: *Nine swords in starburst*
 PLANE: *See below*
 CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*
 FIGHTER: *20th level fighter*
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *5th level in each*
 THIEF/THIEF-ACROBAT: *10th level thief-acrobat*
 MONK: *Nil*
 BARD: *Nil*
 ASSASSIN: *Nil*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/nil*
 S:18/00 I:17 W:15
 D:21 C:18 CH:19 CO:15

Kelanen, The Prince of Swords, is one of the very powerful individuals who might, or might not, be a true deity. Thus he is known as a *hero-deity*, and some who live by the sword pay him homage.

Although his true form is commanding, Kelanen usually takes the guise of a beggar, thief, mercenary, or rogue. In any of these disguises he will appear to be unremarkable, sometimes young, sometimes of middle years. He has the power to *alter self* at will, so Kelanen seldom appears in the same form twice, except when he chooses to show his true one. Each of his forms always bears a scar on face or neck — for a reason to be revealed later. In any form, Kelanen prefers garments of gray or blue-gray and ornaments of silver or platinum.

The true form of Kelanen is that of a youngish, quite handsome man, fair of complexion, with silvery-gray eyes and coal-black hair. It is said that he was once as comely as any deity, but in order to become the Prince of Swords, Kelanen had to undergo a series of challenges and tests which resulted in his disfigurement. His visage bears a long, silvery scar from eye to chin on the right side of his face. Those who know of the Sword Lord recognize Kelanen immediately when this mark is revealed. His form is slender and sinewy, his height just under six feet. He is unnaturally quick and fleet due to enchantments placed upon him.

Kelanen wears *elfin chain* and a +5 *ring of protection*. He employs few other protections.

The sword is Kelanen's only weapon. He is expert with any form of blade, from short to two-handed, cutlass to scimitar. His expertise is such that any sword he wields is equal to a +3 magic weapon. He is able to use a bastard sword to full effect (as used with both hands) in either hand while the other wields' another sword. Kelanen has two special swords which are never far from his person. These weapons are:

Swiftdom: This is a +6 bastard sword of *glassteed* adamantite. Upon command, this weapon will become a *flaming brand* as well. When not aflame, *swiftdom* is impossible to parry and always strikes first. It has a vampiric power which bestows 1 hit point lost by Kelanen



for every 6 points of damage it inflicts on his adversaries. The weapon is endowed with 17 intelligence and has an ego of 25, yet it never seeks to do aught but its master's will. It speaks eight languages and has the following powers: *read languages*, *read magic*, *telepathy*, *detect illusions*, *detect invisible objects*, *detect magic*, and *teleportation*. The *special purpose* of *swiftdom* is to *preserve the Prince of Swords*, so the weapon adds +2 to Kelanen's saving throws and reduces damage sustained by -1 per die. *Swiftdom* is of *absolute neutral* alignment.

Sureguard: This is a +6 broadsword of *glassteed* adamantite. This weapon is also a *frostbrand*-type sword. It will perform as a *defender* It will *dance* for 3 rounds if Kelanen wills it. *Sureguard* is impossible to parry, and its own defensive power is always available to Kelanen. The weapon is endowed with 17 intelligence and has an ego of 19. It speaks 6 languages and has the following powers: *read languages*, *read magic*, *telepathy*,

detect evil/good, *detect secret doors*, *detect traps*, duo-dimension (at 17th level). *Sureguard* has no special purpose, but it faithfully serves Kelanen in all respects.

It is reputed that Kelanen has no friends or confidants other than his two swords. It is known for certain that he is 90% likely to be able to *summon* either, one attempt per day being possible.

When armed with any sword, Kelanen has the following bonuses:

| | "to hit" | damage |
|-----------|----------|--------|
| Expertise | +3 | +3 |
| Strength | +3 | +6 |
| Total | +6 | +9 |

The special powers of Kelanen are these:

Charm sword: If the opponent bears a sword with an ego, the sword will recognize the Sword Lord and refuse to harm him.

Immunity to special powers: Although Kelanen can be harmed by swords, he is not affected by anything other than the normal damage of the blade; cold, flame, magical plusses, or magical powers of swords have no effect on Kelanen. A *vorpil blade*, for example, will not sever Kelanen's head under any conditions.

Multiplication: When Kelanen bears a non-intelligent, non-magic sword, he is able to cause it to duplicate itself. After 1 round of combat, a second sword, exactly like the one Kelanen wields, will materialize in the air and combat his enemies as if Kelanen himself were using the weapon. This duplication continues each round until as many as 9 such swords fight against Kelanen's foes. On the 11th round, and each round thereafter, one disappears until none remain. This power can be used but once per day.

Sword blessing: Kelanen can "bless" any sword so that it gains a magical +1 ("to hit" and damage) for 10 rounds. He can do so for as many as 20 blades per day. The effect adds to weapons which are already enchanted.

Sword control: Unless the wielder of a sword is successful in a saving throw versus *spell*, Kelanen can cause that individual's sword to turn against its wielder and strike that individual rather than Kelanen or his allies. This power is employable in addition to normal attacks by Kelanen. It can be used but once per turn, twice per day.

Sword summoning: In addition to the command of his two personal swords, Kelanen is able to *summon* any sword in sight if it is not in the possession of some individual, i.e. in hand or being worn. This he can do but once per day.

Kelanen has a stronghold in an extra-dimensional partial plane. He usually travels on the Prime Material Plane, however, be it on Oerth or another parallel world, seeking adventure and engaging in actions of warlike sort which promote the balance of Neutrality.



Who gets the first swing?

Attack Priority system offers more realism without more work

by Ronald Hall

Felonius Shortstrider, noted halfling fighter-thief from the town of Strobilus, strode confidently down the darkened corridor, short sword in hand, confident that his abilities and quickness, along with his small stature, would protect him from any assault. Suddenly Felonius spied a tall figure in glistening armor appearing from around the corner ahead. The groll turned, sighted the small form of the halfling, and moved immediately forward, raising his two-handed sword as he came. Felonius, however, did not retreat but quickly closed to attack, trusting his quickness and experience to overcome the grinning monster before him. . . .

"Let's see now, Felonius rolls a 3 for initiative and the groll rolls a 2. Neither of them is charging, so the halfling gets the first swing. . . .

"Okay, no hits on the first round, roll initiative again. Les'see, you got a 5 and the groll has a 2, so you get first swing again. The groll takes 5 points of damage and the thief is hit for 4. . . .

"Next round, you have a 1 on initiative and the groll has a 3. The groll swings first this time. Oops — the halfling takes ten points of damage! . . . So much for Felonius. It really wasn't smart to fight the groll, you know."

"But what about my 'quickness and experience'?"

"There's no adjustment for that; the initiative die decides who strikes first. If you had rolled a 2 on the second round to get simultaneous initiatives, then weapon speed would have been taken into account and you would have had two attacks that round."

"So, by rolling higher on initiative in the second round I lost a chance for multiple attacks?"

"Afraid so. That's what the DMG says."

"Let me see that rule!"

Does all of that sound a bit odd? Why didn't the groll swing at the halfling before the halfling's short sword could be brought to bear? After all, the groll is taller, with longer arms and a 6' sword, giving him an overall reach advantage of at least 7'. Surely, being ready to fight, he would get in a swing while the halfling closed to striking range. Assuming just a small amount of intelligence on the monster's part, the groll would backpedal to keep his opponent out of range as long as possible while continuing to swing.

Alternatively, we could assume that the thief's quickness

allowed him to get inside the range of the big sword and attack first — but if quickness was a factor here, why didn't his quickness also help the halfling in the later rounds, after he had already closed and swung once?

It may be foolish for a lightly armored halfling to go up against a groll singlehandedly, but this example illustrates that there are no provisions in the AD&D™ combat rules to allow a character (or NPC) to use guile and quickness rather than sheer force in melee.

The reason for this is that the AD&D system does not use range, weapon length, weapon speed, and dexterity as factors in determining who strikes first. Numerous examples like this one could be constructed, all bearing out the thesis that the standard system is too simplistic to allow players the flexibility to use their skills to the greatest advantage. The AD&D melee combat system is sufficient as a fast approximation and, of course, it works well enough in most instances. However, to really give the players a "feel" for how combat takes place, a more accurate and realistic system is needed.

The Attack Priority System

The Attack Priority System was devised to fill this need. It is designed to allow characters with "faster" weapons (lower weapon speed factors) to have an advantage when it is being determined who strikes first, and even to allow those characters more attacks altogether, by virtue of an advantage in weapon speed (perhaps coupled with superior quickness). At the same time, the Attack Priority System allows characters to use spears or other long weapons to fend off opponents, preventing those foes from using their shorter weapons by keeping them out of range. This all results in a melee that is more tangible to the players and the DM, and allows more interaction and freedom of choice by all involved.

To use this system it is necessary to have each figure roll a separate initiative die, just as in the standard AD&D melee system. The number that results is then increased or decreased by that figure's predetermined modifier to obtain that character's Attack Priority. This new number is then used like the usual initiative roll to decide who gets the first attack.

Different types of modifiers are used in each of the two sets of circumstances that occur before and during a melee. When the opponents start a round outside striking range of each other and attempt to initiate combat, weapon length is the primary

factor in determining the order in which combatants can strike. In these instances, use the *Closing* modifiers from the tables included with this article. Once the combatants are engaged in melee, the speed factor of each of their weapons is a prime consideration. In these situations, use the *In-Range* adjustments to decide who gets the first swing. (Weapon lengths and weapon speed factors are listed in the Players Handbook.)

Other factors: strength, size, dexterity, and level

The Attack Priority modifiers may be adjusted for more than weapon speed or length in certain cases. A relatively stronger combatant can naturally swing a weapon more quickly and with more conviction than someone of average strength, so a *Strength Adjustment* may be used to alter the character's effective weapon-speed figure, thereby changing the in-range modifier for the strong character. (Conversely, a character with below-average strength will suffer a Strength Adjustment penalty, making any weapon that character uses "slower" because of his reduced ability to wield it efficiently.)

When opponents are closing to combat, height (body size) can be an important consideration in determining who has the longer reach, so monsters or characters of size L (those who generally have relatively longer reaches) get a +1 bonus in closing situations, and figures of size S must suffer a -1 penalty when closing with a foe.

Dexterity is also important, both when closing and when in range, so *Dexterity Adjustments* can apply in both situations.

As a character rises in experience level, his or her ability with weapons increases. To simulate this, higher-level figures are given bonuses to their Attack Priority modifiers (both closing and in-range). This supplants the standard system in which higher-level fighters get 3 attacks every two rounds (at 7th level) or two attacks per round (at 13th level). Instead, each character — regardless of class — gets a +1 modifier to Attack Priority every time that character becomes eligible for a new

weapon proficiency. This has the same effect as giving characters more attacks per round, but in a more gradual way. Hence, fighters would have normal initiative (considering experience only) at levels 1-3. They would get +1 on Attack Priority at levels 4-6, +2 at levels 7-9, etc. Clerics and thieves would get their bonuses at levels 5, 9, 13, and so on; magic-users would get Attack Priority bonuses at levels 7, 13, 19, and so forth.

Example: Glandor Trollslayer, a fifth-level fighter who uses a footman's mace and a dagger, has a strength of 17 and a dexterity of 15. The mace, with a length of 2½ feet, carries a closing modifier of -1 (see the table provided with this article). His strength doesn't help Glandor when closing, but his dexterity gives him a +1 and his level another +1, for a net closing modifier of +1.

Once Glandor closes to within striking range, his in-range modifier will be used. The speed factor of a footman's mace is 7; because Glandor has a 17 strength, his effective weapon-speed figure is reduced ("speeded up") by 20% and rounded up, becoming 6 instead. A character wielding a weapon with a weapon speed of 6 gets no adjustment to his in-range modifier by virtue of weapon speed alone, but Glandor's dexterity and experience level both provide +1 bonuses (the same as when closing), yielding an in-range modifier with the mace of +2. Doing the same computations for Glandor using his dagger, his closing modifier comes out to 0 (no effect on the initiative roll), and in range he has an overall modifier of +4 (for a "fast" weapon being used by skilled hands).

Putting modifiers into practice

When in use, the Attack Priority System works much like the AD&D system for determining initiative. Many DM's have each player roll separately for initiative in the standard system, so all that is changed is the addition of the modifiers. These basic modifiers don't change from melee to melee, so players can

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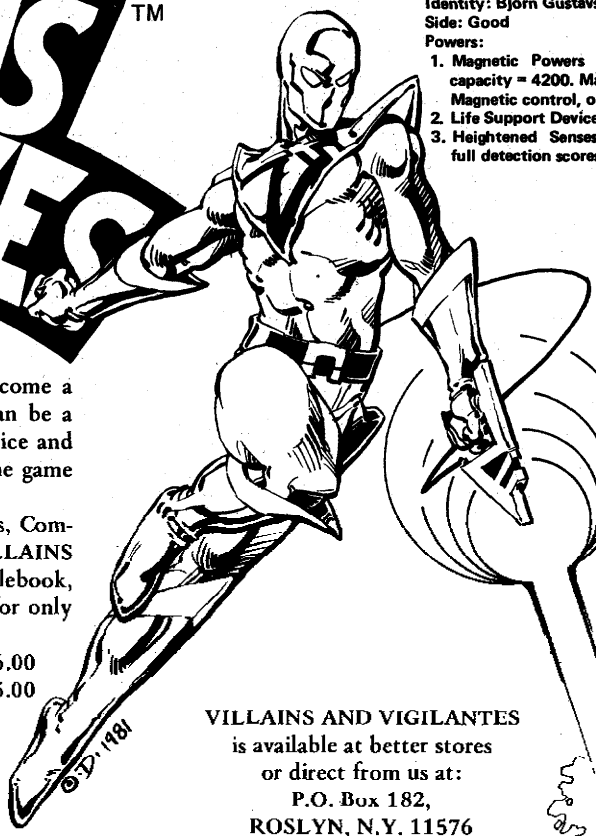
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MAGNETOR: A Swedish electronics researcher who built devices that he might become a champion of justice.

Identity: Bjorn Gustavsen Age: 20
Side: Good Level: 1

Powers:

1. Magnetic Powers Device: 10 charges. Magnetic capacity = 4200. Magnetic blast range = 21". Magnetic control, once achieved, lasts 12 turns.
2. Life Support Device: 30 charges; PR = 1 per hour.
3. Heightened Senses Device: Nightvision goggles, full detection scores in darkness.

Wt.: 160 lbs.
Str.: 14
End.: 13
Agil.: 12
Int.: 14
Char.: 11
Dam. Mod.: +1
Acc.: +1
Hit Pts.: 9
Heal: 1.2
Car. Cap.: 320
Basic HTH: 1d6
Power: 53
Movement: 39"
Det. Hidden: 10%
Det. Danger: 14%
Invent Pts.: 1.4
Inventing: 42%

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calculate their closing and in-range adjustments for any weapon their characters might use and record these numbers on their character sheets. Then, when an initiative roll is made, they simply need to add or subtract the appropriate modifier to obtain the Attack Priority figure for that character.

It also adds to the feeling of realism to roll separately for each monster, even to the point of separate rolls for each part of a multiple attack routine (three separate rolls for a claw/claw/bite attack). Monsters have modifiers for their attacks as well (see the section at the end of this article). These rules do not apply, of course, to monsters that trample or step on opponents or otherwise do not enter normal melee combat. Certain monsters will always charge into combat, regardless of the opponents' actions, and therefore the closing modifiers would not apply for such creatures.

If a figure's modified initiative roll (Attack Priority roll) result is less than zero, that character or monster has a reduced attack ability in the current round. It is assumed that his slow weapon, coupled with a lack of initiative and/or a defensive imperative, has resulted in a very weak attack. In such a case, adjust the "to hit" roll of the character or monster downward — for the current round only — by the amount of the Attack Priority (AP) number. If the AP number is a negative number or zero, the figure is still eligible to make an attack, but only at the end of the current round, after all figures with positive AP numbers have attacked.

If a figure's AP number is between 1 and 6 inclusive, one attack is allowed at the specified time (with results of 6 attacking first, 5 second, etc.).

If an AP number is greater than 6, a second attack by that character or monster is possible. The first attack is executed ahead of any "1-6" results (see the preceding paragraph). Then 12 is subtracted from the initial roll, yielding a result of -5 or greater, and another d6 is rolled. If the sum of those two results is greater than zero, the number is then treated like any other AP roll and given its place in the sequence of attacks during that round. With this system, a third attack is theoretically possible for those with high AP modifiers (+7 or greater).

Example: Our fifth-level fighter, Glandor Trollslayer, has calculated his attack priorities and written them on his character sheet; +1/+2 (closing/in-range) for his mace and 0/+4 for his dagger. Using his dagger in range (+4 AP) gives him a chance at two attacks per round. If Glandor rolls a 5, for instance, this would be modified to 9. He will attack at least once in this round, ahead of any figures with lower AP numbers than 9. Then he rolls a second time. The DM subtracts 12 from Glandor's original AP number and adds this number (9 minus 12, or -3) to the result of the second die roll. If Glandor rolls 1-3 on the second die, he gets no second attack. On a result of 4, he would be allowed to attack again, with a priority of 1 (the lowest possible) on the second attack; a roll of 5 or 6 would allow a second attack at a priority of 2 or 3, respectively. Note that a modified result of 0 on this second roll does not give Glandor a second attack.

Interpreting the closing modifier

The implementation of the system differs slightly when closing modifiers are in use. An AP number of zero or less when closing indicates that the figure was not able to get into range to use his weapon and is therefore still considered to be closing when the next round begins. An AP number from 1-6 inclusive, when closing, is used to determine when a figure has closed to within range and is eligible to make an attack; the figure is then considered in range (able to hit its opponent) for all subsequent attacks until melee is broken off by one or the other. An AP number greater than 6 can render a second attack possible during the round of closing, as with in-range fighting.

In this system, movement and range take on a greater importance. A figure that is out of range obviously cannot attack until it moves into range (using its closing modifier until the round after this occurs). It is possible for one combatant to be in range while the other is still out of range and attempting to close. (This depends primarily upon weapon length.)

Charging

If a character using a short weapon wishes to close quickly regardless of the consequences, he can charge into combat rather than use the cautious approach implied by the Attack Priority System. *Charging* doesn't alter the figure's AP number, but this tactic does move the figure into range to fight. (Flying in to attack counts as charging for these purposes.) Of course, this reckless movement gives the opponent a free swing, at a target that's relatively easy to hit. As stated in the DMG, the act of charging into combat allows a stationary opponent +1 on his "to hit" roll and eliminates any defensive dexterity bonuses that would otherwise be due to the charging figure. Each player must decide whether his character will charge or approach cautiously before rolling the initiative die.

Fending

Another maneuver allowed for in the Attack Priority System is *Fending*. This is the process of holding an opponent at bay with a longer weapon — and it can only be attempted when the figure trying to fend is wielding a longer weapon than his opponent. The wielder of the longer weapon forfeits the opportunity for a full-fledged attack while fending, but the tactic may enable him to prevent his opponent from striking at all. To simulate this in game terms, a character may choose to fend off any single opponent that is trying to close with him (the tactic only applies when both combatants are using closing modifiers) by subtracting any AP bonuses he is entitled to for weapon length, body size, and experience level from his opponent's AP roll instead of adding them to his own roll. Obviously, a figure with negative modifiers in one or more of these categories would be ill advised to attempt a fending maneuver, since these figures would translate into bonuses for the opponent. And note that a figure's dexterity bonus, if one applies, is *not* converted to a penalty for the foe.

Using these numbers as penalties for the opponent instead of bonuses for the fender increases the chance that the opponent will have a negative AP modifier, making it more likely that the opponent's resulting AP number (figuring in the usual d6 roll) will be zero or negative. As stated above, a figure with a negative or zero AP number when closing is considered to be still out of range at the start of the subsequent round. So, although the opponent is *trying* to close, the fender has succeeded in keeping his foe out of range. The opponent won't be able to get in a blow until he gets lucky (makes a higher die roll), or until the fending maneuver is discontinued.

Fending may be attempted with any weapon, as long as the length of the fender's weapon is greater than the length of the opponent's weapon. Regardless of the effect (if any) on the opponent's AP number, the act of attempting to fend always incurs a 10% (-2) penalty on the "to hit" roll for the figure doing the fending. An attempt to fend will always fail (having no adverse effect on the opponent's AP) if the character doing the fending has a shorter weapon than his opponent, and in such a case the -2 penalty "to hit" will still apply.

Note that an alert character may elect to attack the *weapon* being used to fend, in lieu of a direct attack on the holder of the weapon. In this case, a successful "to hit" roll, considering the weapon as armor class 8 (since the weapon is relatively stationary and easy to make contact with), indicates that the fending maneuver has been neutralized.

Retreating and Pressing

Since range is always important, and even more so with this system, it is necessary to allow for the possibility of a combatant retreating from melee. This tactic can permit a figure with a longer weapon to move out of range of an opponent, trying to gain a tactical advantage. Providing for this occurrence makes two further moves essential to the system: *Retreat* and *Press*.

In the *Retreat* mode, a figure attempts to get out of an opponent's effective range — without actually turning and fleeing. Backpedaling in this fashion makes it harder to launch an attack, so this mode earns the retreator a -1 penalty on Attack

ATTACK PRIORITY MODIFIERS

A. Closing modifiers for figures wielding weapons

Weapon length, dexterity, experience level or hit dice, and the size of the character or creature wielding the weapon all have an influence on the figure's closing modifier. Total the appropriate modifiers from each column of this table, for those categories that apply; then see the notes following for other factors that may influence the final closing modifier.

| Modifier | Weapon length | Dexterity | Size | Hit dice* |
|----------|---------------|-----------|------|------------|
| -3 | 0 to 1' | — — | — — | — — |
| -2 | 1+ to 2' | 3-4 | — — | — — |
| -1 | 2+ to 3' | 5-7 | S | up to 1-1 |
| 0 | 3+ to 5' | 8-14 | M | 1-3+ |
| +1 | 5+ to 6' | 15-17 | L | 4-7+ |
| +2 | 6+ to 7' | 18+ | — — | 8-11+ |
| +3 | Over 7' | — — | — — | 12-15+ |
| +4 | — — | — — | — — | 16 or more |

* — The "hit dice" column is used for monsters only; members of character classes (player characters and NPCs) receive an additional +1 to their Attack Priority modifiers (both closing and in-range) for each new weapon proficiency "step" that character has attained. Those "steps" are as follows:

Cleric, thief, or assassin: 5th level (+1), 9th level (+2), 13th level (+3), and so on.

Druid: 6th and 11th.

Fighter, ranger, or paladin: 4th, 7th, 10th, etc.

Magic-user or illusionist: 7th, 13th, 19th, etc.

Monk: 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, etc.

6. Closing modifiers for monsters with natural weapons

The closing modifier for monsters with innate or "natural" weapons (claws, bite, etc.) is influenced by the monster's hit dice (see the above chart for the proper hit-dice modifier), special situations that may apply (see the list below), and the sort of natural weapon the monster is attempting to use:

Hooves (weapons at the end of a lower appendage) or bite (from a jaw): -4

Claws (weapons at the end of an upper appendage) or horns (on the head): -3

Stinger (on the tail) or short tentacles (such as those of a mind flayer or carrion crawler): -2

Long tentacles (such as those of an octopus or displacer beast): No penalty to closing modifier.

C. Special closing modifiers

Of the special instances mentioned here, only the first three will generally apply to player characters; those as well as the other five may be applicable when certain monster types are involved:

Using the "wrong" hand (left for a right-hander, and vice versa) when attacking: -1

While retreating (if the retreat has taken the character out of range): -1

Fighting on water or underwater (for non-aquatic creatures): -2

Very large creatures (dragons, some dinosaurs, etc.): +2

Able to strike from a distance (snakes, giant toads, giant snapping turtles): +2

Exceptionally vicious, mean, and nasty (demons, devils, trolls, wolverines): +1

Quick or agile monsters (cat-like creatures, giant otters, brownies, sprites): +1

Slow or ponderous creatures (zombies, mummies, golems): -1

D. In-range modifiers for figures wielding weapons

Weapon speed, strength, dexterity, and experience level or hit dice of a character or creature wielding a weapon all have an influence on the figure's in-range modifier. Total the appropriate modifiers from each column of the chart below, for those categories that apply; then see the notes following for other factors that may influence the final in-range modifier.

The strength modifiers, given immediately below, show the adjustments to weapon speed which are applied for those of unusually high or low strength; this effective weapon speed should be cross-indexed on the chart below to determine that figure's in-range modifier for weapon speed.

Strength modifiers:

Apply the percentage indicated as an addition or subtraction to the listed speed factor for a weapon, rounding up:

Strength of 3 to 5: +20% to speed factor

Strength of 6 to 8: +10%

Strength of 9 to 13: No adjustment

Strength of 14 to 16: -10%

Strength of 17 to 18(75): -20%

Strength of 18(76) to 18(00): -30%

| Modifier | Weapon speed | Dexterity | Hit dice* |
|----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| -3 | 11+ | — — | — — |
| -2 | 9-10 | 3-4 | — — |
| -1 | 7-8 | 5-7 | up to 1-1 |
| 0 | 5-6 | 8-14 | 1-3+ |
| +1 | 3-4 | 15-17 | 4-7+ |
| +2 | 2 | 18+ | 8-11+ |
| +3 | 1 | — — | 12-15+ |
| +4 | — — | — — | 16 or more |

* — This column applies to monsters only; for player characters and NPCs, use the modifiers for "steps" in weapon proficiency, as given at left under the closing modifiers chart.

E. In-range modifiers for monsters with natural weapons

The in-range modifier for monsters with innate or "natural" weapons (claws, bite, etc.) is influenced by the monster's hit dice (see the above chart for the proper hit-dice modifier), special situations that may apply (see the list below), and the sort of natural weapon the monster is attempting to use:

Bite (from a jaw): No adjustment

Stinger (on the tail), horns (on the head), or long tentacles (such as those of an octopus or displacer beast): +1

Hooves (at the end of a lower appendage) or short tentacles (such as those of a mind flayer or carrion crawler): +2

Claws (at the end of an upper appendage): +3

F. Special in-range modifiers

Of the special instances mentioned here, only the first three will generally apply to player characters; those as well as the other three may be applicable when certain monster types are involved:

Using the "wrong" hand (left for a right-hander, and vice versa) when attacking: -1

While retreating: -1

Fighting on water or underwater (for non-aquatic creatures): -2

Exceptionally vicious, mean, and nasty: +1

Quick or agile monsters: +1

Slow or ponderous creatures: -1

Priority and a -1 on the "to hit" roll. One melee round of retreat will move a figure backward a distance of 1-6 feet (roll d6) plus half his movement allowance. Movement of a shorter distance is possible if the figure desires it (or if there is a wall in the way). Moving backward at fairly high speed while engaged in combat isn't very easy, so the retreat also has a 5% chance per round (non-cumulative) of tripping during this maneuver.

The figure who finds his opponent slipping away from him by retreating will then have to move in (using a closing modifier once again) to continue his assault. This can be a problem if the attacker is wielding a dagger and the opponent with a polearm keeps retreating out of range and fending. To avoid this occurrence, the figure with the dagger can use the *Pressing* maneuver once he has closed within range. Pressing allows him to attempt to keep up with a retreating opponent to continue his attack. The movement rate of a pressing figure in a given round is half his normal movement rate plus a 1-4 feet. The act of pressing incurs a -1 penalty "to hit," so it should usually only be used on retreating opponents (who are also -1 "to hit," as well as -1 on Attack Priority, because they are retreating).

Magic items and monsters

Besides allowing for more precision and more freedom for characters and monsters in melee, the Attack Priority System also opens up other possibilities. New magic items may be devised that can alter the Attack Priority of either the wielder or the opponent. A *sword of speed*, for instance, could be a longsword, +2 to hit and +1 to AP. Similarly, a *spear of fending* would magically interpose itself to give any closing opponent a -2 AP adjustment, in addition to normal modifiers for closing, whether the wielder was attempting to fend or not.

Naturally, if characters get to increase their capabilities, monsters must follow suit to keep up. Monsters of high level (hit dice) get bonuses to their initiative rolls, just as high-level characters do. In addition, creatures with unusual aggressiveness, dexterity, and/or other skills that affect combat ability also get benefits for those characteristics — or penalties, if those characteristics are below the norm.

Natural weapons are a disadvantage to those relying on them in terms of initiative, especially in closing. Creatures using tooth and claw must brave the opponent's weapons before the opponent is within killing range. Claws have a "weapon length" of 0, but they make up for this with a "speed factor" of 1 (the fastest possible). For bite weapons, a general closing modifier of -4 is assigned (since the head must be fully exposed), and a weapon speed of 7 seems accurate. The poor attack priority this combination produces can help explain why some intelligent monsters give up a potentially good, natural attack (one able to cause a lot of damage) in favor of a weapon, which might have lower damage potential but a much better Attack Priority rating.

In this system, monsters are individualized. The speed of a monster's attack and the tactics it uses become important factors in deciding how to attack it and how it will attack. Attack Priority values for the creatures in the Monster Manual, and the methods used for their calculation, are given in the tables at the end of this article. Missile weapons, gaze attacks, breath weapons, and other such attack forms are not accounted for in this system, since they are not melee weapons.

Felonius resurrected

Now let's go back and look at the fight between Felonius Shortstrider and the groll, as events would unfold using the Attack Priority System, using the same die rolls as in the opening example.

Before the combat begins, Felonius has calculated his AP modifiers and written them, with his weapon characteristics, on his character sheet. When closing, he has a -1 modifier (-1 for a short sword, -1 for being smaller than man-sized and +1 for his dexterity of 16). In range he fares a bit better, with a +2 adjustment (+1 for weapon speed and +1 for dexterity). The groll's modifiers are also calculated ahead of time. With only two hit

dice, he has no advantages for level. When closing, he is +1 for being larger than man-sized and +2 for the length of his two-handed sword, or +3 altogether. In range, the big sword is rather unwieldy (weapon speed of 10), and so the groll has a -2 modifier.

As the opponents approach each other, neither charging, the first melee round of contact uses the closing modifiers. The halfling rolls a 3, as before, which modifies to a 2 (with his -1 closing modifier). The groll rolls a 2, but this becomes a 5 after his +3 closing modifier is applied. The groll gets the first swing, but Felonius also moves into range for attacks in subsequent rounds, since his initiative roll including the closing modifier was greater than zero. (If Felonius had rolled a 1 for initiative, this would have been modified to a result of 0, and the halfling would still be out of range at the start of the second round of combat.)

If the groll had used sharper tactics, the monster could have fended the halfling off by choosing to apply his +3 modifier against Felonius's closing roll, which in this case would have given his shorter opponent a net -1. (Fortunately for the halfling, the groll isn't very bright.)

They both missed on the first swing, so the second round begins with new initiative rolls. Felonius gets a 5, which added to his +2 in-range modifier gives him an AP of 7. The groll rolls a 2, adjusted by his -2 modifier to a result of zero. This means that Felonius can swing at least once (hitting the groll for 5 points of damage, as in the first example), and rolls again for the possibility of a second swing, since his AP number was more than 6. This second roll is made at a -5 modifier (7 minus 12) so he must roll a 6 to get a second attack with a priority of 1. His second roll is only a 3, so he doesn't get a second attack this round. The groll, with a zero AP, gets an attack only at the very end of the round. As in the previous example, Felonius is hit by this strike, for 4 points of damage.

In the third round, the groll decides to retreat and attack at the same time, so his net modifier is -3 (-2 in-range and another -1 for retreating). Felonius doesn't think to press, instead attacking normally. When the groll rolls a 5, his AP becomes 2. Felonius' roll of 1 converts to an AP of 3, so again the halfling swings first. He hits the groll once more, doing 5 points of damage and killing the unfortunate monster. (If the groll had survived this round, the halfling would be out of range to start the next round, because of the groll's retreat, and the use of the combatants' closing modifiers would again have given the groll an advantage.)

Melee becomes more than die rolls

It still might not be wise for a halfling fighter-thief in leather armor to take on a groll, but this example illustrates the benefits of using the Attack Priority System. The size, dexterity, and movement abilities of the combatants all play a part in deciding the outcome of the melee, not just their armor classes and "to hit" probabilities. Although this system doesn't result in large changes in the flow of combat or greatly affect the odds of one character beating a particular monster, it does allow a player or DM to fit a character's or monster's weapons and fighting style to the figure's abilities, further allowing him to use his attributes and minimize the effects of his weaknesses.

Use of this system will give the players and the DM a better feel for the realities of combat. Characters and NPC's should now choose weapons more carefully, with strength and dexterity becoming more of a factor. Stronger characters can handle larger weapons more easily, and more dexterous ones will attack more rapidly and more often than their larger, clumsier foes. Spears and polearms take on their proper roles in holding foes at bay, fighting larger monsters and preventing charges. Movement in melee will now reflect the differences in weapons and skills. In other words, melee can become more than just a series of die rolls as players and monsters maneuver to utilize their weapons to their fullest potential. A more interesting and realistic simulation of melee is obtained by simply combining the appropriate modifiers with the initiative roll.

MONSTER ATTACK PRIORITIES

Attack Priority modifiers for all creatures in the Monster Manual are given in the following table. The AP numbers were calculated according to the procedures described in the accompanying article, incorporating into the final number(s) any bonuses and/or penalties (which may be mentioned in the right-hand column) for a monster's special characteristics.

Numbers in parentheses are adjustments to be applied "by weapon type," used for monsters that can and do employ a variety of hand-held weapons. For such monsters, the DM must calculate a final AP number after determining how the monster is armed.

For size L weapon-using creatures, the standard weapon speed factors have been used (without adjusting for a monster's actual or estimated strength), on the assumption that a relatively large-sized weapon will be used by a size L monster, so that the weapon's larger size effectively

cancels out the strength advantage that would otherwise apply if the monster was using a normal-sized weapon (such as that used by size M or S figures) of the same sort.

An AP number in front of a slash (/) is a closing modifier; one following a slash is an in-range modifier. Pairs of numbers separated by a double slash (//) are for creatures of varying characteristics, such as the three sets of numbers for the anhkheg: -3/0 for those of 3 hit dice, -2/+1 for those of 4-7 hit dice, and -1/+2 for those of 8 hit dice. A hyphen (-) in place of a closing modifier indicates that the attack mode in question cannot be used when closing.

Except where specified otherwise, AP numbers given are for an "ordinary" creature of the listed type. Special properties that may apply to individual monsters (above average size, below average movement rate, etc.) because of that monster's individuality, or because of the circumstances, must be accounted for by the DM.

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Aerial Servant | Grasp: +3/+8 | +1 for quickness |
| Anhkheg | Bite: -3/0 // -2/+1 // -1/+2 | for HD of 3 // 4-7 // 8 |
| Ant, Giant | Bite: -5/0 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Ape, Gorilla | 2 hands: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Ape, Carnivorous | 2 hands: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | +1 for dexterity but -1 to claws for difficult use |
| Axe Beak | 2 claws: -2/+3; Beak: -2/+1 | +1 for viciousness |
| Baboon | Bite: -4/+1 | +2 for quickness |
| Badger | 2 claws: -2/+5; Bite: -3/+2 | +2 for quickness |
| Badger, Giant | 2 claws: -1/+5; Bite: -2/+2 | usually employs charge and trample attack |
| Baluchitherium | 2 hooves: 0/+5 | +1 for speed; closing modifier varies by HD (1 // 2 // 3) |
| Barracuda | Bite: -4/+1 // -3/+1 // -2/+1 | -1 for slowness |
| Basilisk | Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| Bear, Black | 2 claws: -3/+3; Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| Bear, Brown | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Bear, Cave | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Beaver, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Beetle, Bombardier | Horns: -3/+1 | — — |
| Beetle, Boring | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Beetle, Fire | Bite: -5/0 | — — |
| Beetle, Rhinoceros | Horn: +1/+4; Bite: 0/+3 | — — |
| Beetle, Stag | 2 horns: -1/+2; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Beetle, Water | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Beholder | Bite: -2/+2 | -1 for slow reactions |
| Black Pudding | "Bite": -4/+1 // -3/+1 | -1 for slowness; closing modifier varies by size (5-6' // 7-8') |
| Blink Dog | Bite: -2/+2 | +1 for quickness |
| Boar, Giant | Tusks: +1/+4 | +1 for aggressiveness; usually charges into combat |
| Boar, Wild | Tusks: -2/+2 | +1, as for giant boar |
| Boar, Warthog | Tusks: -3/+1 | not as aggressive as other boars |
| Brownie | Short sword: -1/+2 | +2 for high dexterity, -1 to closing for size |
| Buffalo | 2 hooves: -2/+3 | often charges into combat |
| Bug bear | Bite: -3/0; By weapon type: (+1/0) | |
| Bulette | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 | |
| Bull | 2 horns: -1/+2 | often charges into combat |
| Camel, Wild | Bite: -3/0 | |
| Carrion Crawler | 8 tentacles: -2/+2 | should be rolled together |
| Catoblepas | Tail: +1/+3 | +1 for agile tail |
| Cattle, Wild | — — (no normal attack) | attack only on charge (stampede) |
| Centaur | By weapon type: (+3/+2) | +1 for quickness |
| Centipede, Giant | Bite: -5/0 | +1 for aggressiveness; often charges |
| Cerebral Parasite | — — (no melee attack) | |
| Chimera | 2 claws: 0/+5; 2 horns: 0/+3 Lion bite: -1/+2; Dragon bite: 0/+2 | — — |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|---|---|--|
| Cockatrice | Beak: -4/+1 | -1 to closing for small size --- |
| Couatl | Bite: -2/+2; Constrict: -3/+2 | |
| Crab, Giant | 2 claws: -1/+3 | +1 to closing for long claws |
| Crayfish, Giant | 2 claws: 0/+4 | +1 to closing for long claws |
| Crocodile | Bite: -3/0; Tail: -1/+1 | --- |
| Crocodile, Giant | Bite: -2/+1, Tail: +1/+2 | --- |
| DEMONS: All demons get +1 for aggressiveness in addition to other adjustments. | | |
| Demogorgon | Tail: +6/+8; 2 tentacles: +8/+8 | +2 beyond other bonuses |
| Juiblex | Lash: +6/+7 | +1 for quick attack |
| Manes | 2 hands: -3/+4; Bite: -4/+1 | --- |
| Orcus | Tail: +6/+8; 2 fists: +4/+9; By weapon type: (+7/+6) | +1 beyond other bonuses, +2 with tail (high dex) |
| Succubus | 2 claws: -1/+5 | --- |
| Type I | 2 claws: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3; 2 claws (feet): -1/+4 | second set of claws are -2 (harder to use) |
| Type II | 2 claws: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3 | --- |
| Type III | 2 hands: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3; 2 pincers: +2/+6 | pincers have additional +1 to closing for length |
| Type IV | 2 claws: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3 | --- |
| Type V | Tail constriction: +1/+3; By weapon type x6: (+4/+3) | constriction is as tail (stinger) but at -1 |
| Type VI | Sword: +6/+3; Whip: +7/+2 | --- |
| Yeenoghu | Flail: +7/+6 | +1 beyond other bonuses |
| DEVILS: All devils get at least +1, in addition to other bonuses, for aggressiveness. | | |
| Asmodeus | Rod: +10/+8 | +2 beyond other bonuses |
| Baalzebul | Bite: +3/+7 | +1 beyond other bonuses |
| Barbed | 2 claws: 0/+6; Tail: +1/+4 | --- |
| Bone | Hook: +6/+3 | hook is over 7' long |
| Dispater | Rod: +7/+7 | +1 beyond other bonuses; treat rod as 6'+ quarterstaff |
| Erinyes | Dagger: 0/+4 | --- |
| Geryon | 2 hands: +4/+9; Tail: +5/+7 | +1 beyond other bonuses |
| Horned | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2; Tail: +1/+3; Fork: +6/+2; Whip: +7/0 | --- |
| Ice | 2 claws: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3; Tail: +2/+4; Spear: +8/+2 | --- |
| Lemure | Bite: -3/+1 | --- |
| Pit Fiend | Ancus: +7/+3; Club: +5/+5; Tail constriction: +3/+5 | assume ancus is 6' long, speed factor 8 |
| DINOSAURS: Most are +2 to closing modifier for their great size. | | |
| Anatosaurus | Tail: +2/+3 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Ankylosaurus | Tail: +2/+3 | --- |
| Antrodemus | 2 claws: +2/+6; Bite: +1/+3 | --- |
| Apatosaurus | Bite: +1/+3 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Archelon Ischyrras | Bite: -2/+1 | --- |
| Brachiosaurus | Bite: +1/+3 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Camarasaurus | Bite: 0/+2 | -2 overall; skittish herbivore |
| Ceratosaurus | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 | only +1 to closing for size |
| Cetiosaurus | Bite: +1/+3 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Dinichtys | Bite: 0/+2 | --- |
| Diplodocus | Bite: +1/+3 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Elasmosaurus | Bite: +3/+4 | +1 overall for aggressiveness; +1 to closing for long neck |
| Gorgosaurus | 2 claws: +3/+7; Bite: +2/+4 | +1 overall for aggressiveness |
| Iguanodon | 2 thumb spikes: 0/+4; Tail: +1/+2 | --- |
| Lambeosaurus | Bite: 0/+2 | -1 overall; herbivore |
| Megalosaurus | Bite: +1/+3 | --- |
| Monoclonius | Bite: 0/+2 | aggressive herbivore |
| Mosasaurus | Bite: +1/+3 | --- |
| Paleoscincus | Tail: +2/+3 | --- |
| Pentaceratops | 2 horns: +2/+4; Bite: +1/+3 | aggressive herbivore |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Plateosaurus | —— (no melee attack) | |
| Plesiosaurus | Bite: +8/+5 | +1 overall for great aggressiveness, plus extra +1 to closing |
| Pteranodon | Beak: -2/0 | treat dive as charge |
| Stegosaurus | Tail slash: +5/+4 | orients tail to enemy (extra +1 to closing) |
| Styracosaurus | Bite: 0/+2 | likely to charge |
| Teratosaurus | 2 claws: +1/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | |
| Triceratops | Large horn: +4/+4; Small horn: +3/+5; Bite: +2/+4 | large horn has extra +1 to closing, -1 to in-range |
| Tyrannosaurus | 2 claws: +3/+8; Bite: +2/+5 | +1 for ferocity |
| Displacer Beast | 2 tentacles: +3/+3 | +1 overall for quickness |
| Djinni | Hands: -1/+4; By weapon type: (+2/+1) | |
| Dog, War | Bite: -3/+1 | +1 for training & quickness |
| Dog, Wild | Bite: -4/0 | |
| Dolphin | Bite: -3/+1 | +1 for underwater speed |
| Doppelganger | Bite: -3/+1; By weapon type: (+1/+1) | —— |

DRAGONS: Included in the figures given are +2 to closing for the bite attacks and +1 to closing for claws (the claws are harder to use). Figures given are for small to average-sized dragons of ages Young Adult to Old (inclusive); adjust for other ages and sizes as follows: Very Young, -2; Young and Sub-Adult, -1; Very Old and Ancient, +1; Singular forms (Tiamat and Bahamut), +2; huge size, +1 (in-addition to age adjustment).

| | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Black Dragon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | —— |
| Blue Dragon | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| Brass Dragon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | —— |
| Bronze Dragon | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| Chromatic Dragon | Tail stinger: +6/+7 5 bites: +4/+6 each | stinger is +2 to closing |
| Copper Dragon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | —— |
| Gold Dragon | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| Green Dragon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | —— |
| Platinum Dragon | 2 claws: +4/+9; Bite: +4/+6 | —— |
| Red Dragon | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| Silver Dragon | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| White Dragon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | —— |
| Dragonne | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | —— |
| Dragon Turtle | 2 claws: +2/+6; Bite: +1/+3 | +2 to closing modifier for size |
| Dryad | Dagger: -2/+2 | |
| Dwarf | By weapon type | as for characters |
| Eagle, Giant | 2 claws: -2/+4; Beak: -3/+1 | treat dive as charge |
| Ear Seekers | —— (no melee attack) | |
| Eel, Electric | Bite: -4/0 | —— |
| Eel, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | |
| Eel, Weed | Bite: -4/-1 | +2 to closing for quick attack |
| Efreiti | Hands: 0/+5; By weapon type: (+3/+2) | |

ELEMENTALS: The figures given below are calculated for elementals conjured through a staff. Add (+1/+1) for those conjured through a device or (+2/+2) for those brought forth by a spell. The strike of an elemental is difficult to equate to other forms of attack. For the purpose of calculations it is assumed that they use a projection similar to an arm to hit an opponent. All elementals have a -1 modifier for being "out of their element," assuming they are encountered on the Prime Material Plane.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Air Elemental | 1 strike: +1/+6 | +1 for speed |
| Earth Elemental | 1 strike: -1/+4 | -1 for lack of speed |
| Fire Elemental | 1 strike: 0/+5 | —— |
| Water Elemental | 1 strike: 0/+5 | —— |
| Elephant, either kind | 2 tusks: +1/+3; Trunk: +1/+4; 2 front feet: 0/+2 | tusks have an extra +1 to closing for length |
| Elf | By weapon type | as for characters |
| Ettin | 2 spiked clubs: +3/+3 | other weapons at (+3/+2) |
| Eye, Floating | —— (no melee attack) | —— |
| Eye of the Deep | 2 pincers: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 | -1 for slow reactions; add +1 for 12 HD type |
| Flightless Bird | Peck: -3/0; Kick: -3/+3 | +1 to closing on peck for long neck |
| Frog, Giant | Tongue: +2/+1 // +3/+1 // +4/+1 | modifier for closing varies with HD: 1 (S) N 2 (M) // 3 (L) |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|--|--|--|
| Frog, Killer | 2 claws: -4/+4; Bite: -4/+1 | small but aggressive; +1 to in-range |
| Frog, Poisonous | Bite: -5/0 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Fungi, Violet | 1-4 branches: -/0 | no attack until in range |
| Gar, Giant | Bite: -2/+2 | — — |
| Gargoyle | 2 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1; Horn: -2/+2 | — — |
| Gas Spore | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Gelatinous Cube | Touch: -5/-1 | no active attack |
| Ghast | 2 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1 | nausea gives opponent -1 |
| Ghost | Touch: -1/+5 | — — |
| Ghoul | 2 claws: -3/+3; Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| GIANTS: All of the modifiers below are computed at the lowest possible levels; for giants of greater than the minimum number of hit dice, adjust the modifiers upward accordingly. | | |
| Cloud Giant | Great club: +7/+3; Other weapons: (+4/+3) | +1 to both modifiers if 16 HD or more |
| Fire Giant | Huge Sword: +7/+1; Other weapons: (+4/+3) | +1 to both modifiers if 16 HD or more |
| Frost Giant | Great axe: +5/0; Other weapons: (+3/+2) | +1 to both modifiers if 12 HD or more |
| Hill Giant | Club: +5/+2; Other weapons: (+3/+2) | — — |
| Stone Giant | Stone Club: +5/+2; Other weapons: (+3/+2) | +1 to both modifiers if 12 HD or more |
| Storm Giant | By weapon type: (+5/+4) | — — |
| Gnoll | Bite: -3/0; By weapon type: (+1/0) | — — |
| Gnome | By weapon type: (-1 /0) | +1 for individuals over 1 HD |
| Goat, Giant | Horns: -3/+1 | often charges |
| Goblin | Bite: -6/-1; By weapon type: (-2/-1) | +1 to both for leader types |
| Golem, Clay | Fist: 0/+6 | — — |
| Golem, Flesh | 2 fists: 0/+6 | — — |
| Golem, Iron | Sword: +4/+3 | -1 to both modifiers for slowness |
| Golem, Stone | Fist: 0/+6 | -1 to both modifiers for slowness |
| Gorgon | Horns: 0/+3 | — — |
| Gray Ooze | Strike: +1/0 or +2/0 | depends on size |
| Green Slime | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Griffon | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Groaning Spirit | Touch: -2/+4 | — — |
| Halfling | By weapon type: (-2/-1) | -1 to closing for small size; +1 for individuals over 1 HD |
| Harpy | 2 claws: -3/+3; Club: 0/0; Other weapons: (0/0) | — — |
| Hell Hound | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Herd Animal | (calculate separately for each type) | — — |
| Hippocampus | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Hippogriff | 2 claws: -2/+3; Bite: -3/0 | — — |
| Hippopotamus | Bite: -2/+1 | -1 for slowness |
| Hobgoblin | Bite: -4/0; By weapon type: (0/0) | chiefs are +1 overall |
| Homonculous | Bite: -5/0 | -1 to closing for size |
| Horse, any kind | 2 hooves: -2/+3; Bite: -3/0 | — — |
| Hydra (per head) | Bite: -2/+1 | +1 overall for 8-11 heads, +2 overall for 12 heads |
| Hyena | Bite: -3/+1 | +1 for aggressiveness |
| Hyena, Giant | Bite: -1/+2 | +1 for aggressiveness |
| Imp | Tail: -2/+2 | +1 for quickness, -1 to closing for size |
| Intellect Devourer | 4 claws: -1/+4 | +1 to closing for leap |
| Invisible Stalker | Strike: 0/+5 | — — |
| Irish Deer | 1 or 2 horns: 0/+1 | +1 to closing, -1 to in-range for very large horns |
| Ixitxachitl | Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| Jackal | Bite: -6/-1 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Jackalwere | Bite: -4/+1 | uses weapons in human form |
| Jaguar | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1; 2 rear claws: -/+3 | rear claws only used when in range |
| Ki-rin | 2 hooves: 0/+5; Horn: +1/+3 | — — |
| Kobold | Bite: -6/-1; By weapon type: (-2/-1) | -1 to closing for small size |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|--|--|---|
| Lamia | Dagger: 0/+4 | |
| Lammasu | 2 claws: 0/+5 | +1 for quickness |
| Lamprey | Bite: -5/0 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Lamprey, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | |
| Larva | Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| Leech, Giant | — — (no normal melee attack) | |
| Leopard | 2 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1; 2 rear claws: -/+3 | +1 for quickness; rear claws used only when in range |
| Leprechaun | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Leucrotta | Bite: -2/+1; 2 hooves: -/+4 | hooves used only for retreat |
| Lich | Touch: -1/+5 | higher HD are better |
| Lion | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2; 2 rear claws: -/+4 | +1 overall for quickness; rear claws used only in range |
| Lion, Mountain | 2 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1; 2 rear claws: -/+3 | same as for lion |
| Lion, Spotted | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 2 rear claws: -/+4 | same as for lion |
| Lizard, Fire | 2 claws: 0/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | -1 overall for slowness, +2 to closing for large size |
| Lizard, Giant | Bite: -3/0 | — — |
| Lizard, Minotaur | 2 claws: 0/+4; Bite: -1/+1 | -1 for slowness, +2 to closing for large size |
| Lizard, Subterranean | Bite: 0/+2 | +1 overall for aggressiveness, +2 to closing for large size |
| Lizard Man | 2 claws: -3/+3; Bite: -4/0; Club: 0/0 | |
| Locathah | By weapon type: (0/0) | fighting underwater |
| Lurker Above | — — (no normal melee attack) | drop and constrict only |
| LYCANTHROPEs: For shape-changers in human form, attacks will be by weapon type with adjustments according to the level/HD of the creature. | | |
| Werebear | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | |
| Wereboar | Tusks: +1/+4 | +1 overall for aggressiveness |
| Wererat | Sword: 0/0 // -1/0 | for rat-man // rat-like forms |
| Weretiger | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2; Rake (rear claws): -/+4 | +1 for quickness; rear claws only used in range |
| Werewolf | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Lynx, Giant | 2 claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1; 2 rear claws: -/+3 | +1 overall for quickness; +1 to closing for leap |
| Mammoth | 2 tusks: +3/+4; Trunk: +2/+5; 2 front feet: 0/+3 | tusks have an extra +2 to closing for length |
| Manticore | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 | +1 for quickness |
| Masher | Bite: -1/+2; Spines: -/0 | spines only used in range |
| Mastodon | 2 tusks: +2/+4; Trunk: +2/+5; 2 front feet: 0/+3 | tusks have an extra +1 to closing for length |
| Medusa | Asp bite: -2/+1 | asps have 1' range |
| Men | By weapon type and HD | berserkers get +2 when enraged |
| Merman | By weapon type: (0/0) | — — |
| Mimic | pseudopod: -/+2 | no strike if not in range; +1 more if HD 8+ |
| Mind Flayer | 4 tentacles: 0/+4 | — — |
| Minotaur | Butt: -1/+2; Bite: -2/+1; Flail: +2/+1; Axe: +3/0 | other weapons possible at (+2/+1) |
| Mold, Brown | — — (no melee attack) | |
| Mold, Yellow | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Morkoth | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Mule | 2 hooves: -2/+3; Bite: -3/0 | |
| Mummy | Arm smash: -3/+3 | -1 for slow attack |
| Naga, Guardian | Bite: 0/+2; Constrict: -1/+1 | +1 to all attacks if 12 HD; +1 to closing for bite |
| Naga, Spirit | Bite: 0/+2 | +1 to closing for bite |
| Naga, Water | Bite: -2/+1 | +1 overall if 8 HD; +1 to closing for bite |
| Neo-Otyugh | 2 tentacles: +4/+4; Bite: 0/+4 | +1 for aggressiveness, +1 overall if 12 HD |
| Night Hag | Bite: -2/+2 | |
| Nightmare | 2 hooves: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Nixie | By weapon type: (-2/-1) | -1 to closing for small size |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|--|--|--|
| Nymph | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Ochre Jelly | Touch: -3/+3 | -1 for slowness |
| Octopus, Giant | 6 tentacles: +3/+3; Bite: -2/+1 | bite is -1 for difficulty of use |
| Ogre | Fist: -1/+4; By weapon type: (+2/+1) | — — |
| Ogre Mage | Fist: -1/+4; By weapon type: (+2/+1) | leaders are +1 overall |
| Orc | By weapon type | as for characters |
| Otter, Giant | Bite: -1/+2 | +1 for quickness |
| Otyugh | 2 tentacles: +1/+2; Bite: -3/+1 | +1 to closing if size L; +1 if 8 HD |
| Owl, Giant | 2 talons: -1/+4; Beak: -3/+1 | talons are +1 to closing |
| Owl bear | 2 claws: 0/+5; Beak: -1/+2 | +1 overall for aggressiveness |
| Pegasus | 2 hooves: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Peryton | Horns: -2/+2 | usually charges into melee |
| Piercer | — — (treat as missile weapon) | — — |
| Pike, Giant | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Pixie | By weapon type: (-2/-1) | -1 to closing for small size |
| Porcupine, Giant | Bite: -3/0 | -1 overall; not aggressive |
| Portuguese Man-O-War | — — (no active attack) | |
| Pseudo-Dragon | Bite: -5/0; Tail: -3/+1 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Purple Worm | Bite: 0/+2; Tail: +1/+3 | -1 overall for slow attack |
| Quasit | 2 claws: -3/+4; Bite: -4/+1 | +1 overall for quickness |
| Rakshasa | 2 claws: -1/+5; Bite: -2/+2 | +1 overall for quickness |
| Ram, Giant | Butt: -1/+2 | often charges to attack |
| Rat, Giant | Bite: -6/-1 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Ray, Manta | Bite: -1/+2; Tail: +1/+3 | — — |
| Ray, Pungi | — — (no normal attack) | — — |
| Ray, Sting | Tail spine: -1/+1 | — — |
| Remorhaz | Bite: +1/+1 | +4 to closing for size, speed; +5 for 8+ HD, +6 for 12+ HD |
| Rhinoceros | Horn: 0/+3 | often charges to attack |
| Rhinoceros, Woolly | Horn: +1/+4 | +1 for aggressiveness |
| Rot | 2 talons: +3/+7; Beak: +2/+4 | +2 to closing for huge size |
| Roper | 6 strands: +5/+3; Bite: -2/+1 | -1 on bite; +2 to closing on strands; +1 overall if 12 HD |
| Rot Grub | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Rust Monster | 2 antennae: 0/+2 | — — |
| Sahuagin | By weapon type: (0/0) | — — |
| Salamander | Spear: +2/0; Tail: -1/+2 | +1 overall for a baron |
| Satyr | Butt: -1/+3 | +1 overall for quickness |
| Scorpion, Giant | 2 pincers: -1/+4; Tail stinger: -1/+2 | +1 to closing with pincers for large size |
| Sea Hag | Dagger: -2/+2 | — — |
| Sea Horse, Giant | Butt: -3/+1 | +1 overall if 4 HD |
| Sea Lion | 2 Claws: -1/+4; Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Shadow | Touch: -3/+3 | — — |
| Shambling Mound | 2 fists: 0/+5 | |
| Shark | Bite: -4/0 // -3/+1 // -2/+2 | For HD of 3 // 4-7 // 8; add +1 to closing if size L |
| Shark, Giant | Bite: -1/+2 // 0/+3 | For HD of 10-11 // 12-15 |
| Shedu | 2 hooves: -1/+4 | — — |
| Shrieker | — — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Skeleton | Sword: 0/0 | other weapons possible |
| Skunk, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Slithering Tracker | Touch: -2/+1 | unusual attack form |
| Slug, Giant | Bite: 0/+2 | +2 to closing for huge size; -1 overall for slow attack |
| SNAKE, GIANT: All giant snakes have a bite attack which is +2 to closing because the snake can strike from a distance. Other plusses for size are possible. Snakes with a constriction attack have reduced Attack Priorities for that attack form because they must surround the target with their body. | | |
| Amphisbaena | 2 bites: -1/+1 | both heads may attack |
| Constrictor | Bite: 0/+1; Constrict: -1 /+1 | — — |
| Poisonous | Bite: 0/+1 | — — |
| Sea | Bite: +1/+2; Constrict: 0/+2 | — — |
| Spitting | Bite: -1 /+1 | also has missile attack |

| Monster | Weapons and modifiers | Special adjustments and comments |
|--|--|--|
| Spectre | Touch: -2/+4 | — — |
| SPHINX: Sphinxes are generally dissimilar except that they all have leonine bodies (+1 for quickness) and all can fly. | | |
| Androsphinx | 2 claws: +2/+7 | |
| Criosphinx | 2 claws: +1/+6; Butt: +1/+4 | — — |
| Gynosphinx | 2 claws: +1/+6 | |
| Hieracosphinx | 2 claws: +1/+6; Bite: 0/+3 | — — |
| Spider, Giant | Bite: -2/+1 | often drops on prey |
| Spider, Huge | Bite: -2/0 | leaps to attack; +2 to closing |
| Spider, Large | Bite: -5/0 | |
| Spider, Phase | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Spider, Water, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | +1 for ease of action underwater |
| Sprite | By weapon type: (-1/0) | -1 to closing for small size |
| Squid, Giant | 8 tentacles: +4/+4; Beak: -1/+3 | -1 to closing for beak, for difficulty of access |
| Stag | Antlers: -1/+1; 2 hooves: -3/+2 | antlers are +1 to closing |
| Stag, Giant | Antlers: 0/+2; 2 hooves: -2/+3 | antlers are +1 to closing |
| Stirge | (treat as +1/+1) | not a normal attack |
| Strangle Weed | — (no melee attack) | |
| Su-Monster | 4 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Sylph | — (no melee attack) | — — |
| Thought Eater | — (no melee attack) | |
| Tick, Giant | Bite: -0 // -/+1 | for HD of 2-3 // 4; dropping on victim negates closing roll |
| Tiger | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2; Rake (rear claws): -/+4 | +1 for quickness; rear claws only used in range |
| Tiger, Sabre-Tooth | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2; Rake (rear claws): -/+4 | +1 for quickness; rear claws only used in range |
| Titan | Sword: +6/+4; Other weapons possible: (+6/+4) | +1 overall if over 20 HD |
| Titanotheres | Butt: +1/+4 | often charges into combat |
| Toad, Giant | Bite: -2/0 | +2 to closing for hop |
| Toad, Ice | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Toad, Poisonous | Bite: -2/0 | +2 to closing for hop |
| Trapper | — (no melee attack) | trap only |
| Treant | 2 fists: -1/+4 | +1 overall if 8-11 HD; +2 if 12 HD |
| Triton | By weapon type: (0/0) | +1 overall for exceptional types |
| Troglodyte | 2 claws: -3/+3; Bite: -4/0; By weapon type: (0/0) | exceptional leaders are +1 overall |
| Troll | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: -1/+2 | +1 for viciousness |
| Turtle, Sea, Giant | Bite: -1/+2 | -1 for non-aggressiveness |
| Turtle, Snapping, Giant | Bite: 0/+2 | +2 to closing for long neck |
| Umber Hulk | 2 claws: 0/+5; Bite: 0/+2 | +1 to closing on bite for length of mandibles |
| Unicorn | 2 hooves: -2/+3; Horn: 0/+2 | horn is +1 to closing for length; often charges |
| Vampire | Strike: -1/+5 | — — |
| Wasp, Giant | Bite: -3/+1; Sting: -2/+2 | -1 to closing for stinger |
| Water Weird | Strike: +1/+3 | strikes as 6 HD monster; long reach and quick |
| Weasel, Giant | Bite: -3/+1 | +1 for quickness and aggressiveness |
| Whale | Bite: +1/+3 // +2/+4; Flipper: +1/+5 // +2/+6 | For HD of 12-15 // 16+; non-carnivorous types -1 overall |
| Wight | Claw: -2/+4 | — — |
| Will-o-Wisp | Touch: 0/+6 | +1 for quickness |
| Wind Walker | — (not a melee attack) | — — |
| Wolf | Bite: -5/0 | -1 to closing for small size |
| Wolf, Dire | Bite: -4/0 | — — |
| Wolf, Winter or Worg | Bite: -2/+1 | — — |
| Wolverine | 2 claws: -2/+5; Bite: -3/+2 | +2 overall for speed and viciousness; -1 to closing for size |
| Wolverine, Giant | 2 claws: 0/+6; Bite: -1/+3 | +2 overall for speed and viciousness |
| Wraith | Touch: -2/+4 | — — |
| Wyvern | Bite: -1/+1; Tail: +1/+3 | +1 overall on tail; +2 to closing (on bite only) for size |
| Xorn | 3 claws: -2/+4; Bite: -3/+1 | — — |
| Yeti | 2 claws: -1/+4 | — — |
| Zombie | Claw: -4/+2 | -1 overall for slow attack |



THE TAKING OF BRIMSTONE



THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE

A BOOT HILL™ adventure by Donald Mumma

Brimstone is a young town that is already feeling its age. It sprang up in the scrub lands of northern Arizona, in anticipation of the railroad route that would pass that way. A few merchants and businessmen managed to make a decent living from a population that was only partly transient and generally very quiet.

Then the rumors started — rumors of silver to be found in the nearby mountains. And, unfortunately for Brimstone, some of the rumors were true. The population of the town swelled with visitors, people who didn't care about Brimstone nearly as much as they cared about themselves. Some of them were prospectors willing to work for their riches, but most of them were criminals and saddle tramps expecting to line their pockets at the expense of someone else's wallet — if not his life.

Within a few weeks, Brimstone was overrun by outlaws and money-hungry cowboys. Fists and bullets flew at the slightest provocation. The town sheriff was gunned down, and many another good man bent to the will of the outlaws — or died because he refused to. The

citizens' committee in Brimstone tried in vain to find a successor for the sheriff; no single man could hope to corral all the outlaws, or muster enough support from the townspeople to make a stand against them.

Then came the railroad — and what the good people of Brimstone had hoped would be their salvation instead only added to their troubles. The rails approached Brimstone from the east; as soon as the end of the line was closer to Brimstone than their fast "watering hole," the railroad men started coming to town when they weren't on duty. The tracklayers were a rough and unruly bunch; they usually came to Brimstone in large groups, intending to have a good time and not caring much about who got hurt in the process. The tracks reached Brimstone, and the workers descended on the town in even greater force. Then the tracks inched farther to the west, but the tracklayers still called Brimstone "home" in their off hours. Because Brimstone is the only town for at least 30 miles around, and because the railroad is maintaining a warehouse in town near the tracks, the

railroad men are likely to be around for quite some time.

At about the time the railroad men arrived, the good people of Brimstone realized that help, if their town was to get any, would have to come from outside rather than inside. The word got out: There was wealth for the giving to anyone who could bring law and order back to this lawless town. The call attracted a few itinerant cowboys who thought they had nothing to lose — and ended up losing their lives. It also brought occasional groups of two or three bounty-hunter types who didn't realize what they had got themselves into until it was too late. A lot of people have found out the hard way that the outlaws in Brimstone don't intend to give up without a fight — a fight they don't figure on losing.

Now the call has been heard by a group of stalwart straight-shooters who look to have the best chance yet to release the good citizens of Brimstone from the grip of terrorism and anarchy. The town's just ahead, off on the western horizon. . . . Follow the railroad tracks and you'll be there before you know it.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The text for this adventure should be read and thoroughly understood by the referee before play begins. None of the information that follows is to be known by players or player characters, except for facts they might learn in the course of the adventure.

THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE is an adventure designed for the BOOT HILL™ game. It should be undertaken by no less than four experienced player characters. The only other materials needed to run this adventure are a copy of the BOOT HILL rules, a pair of percentile dice, and paper and pencil for record keeping.

This adventure puts the player characters in the role of "town tamers," resembling the activities of such famous Old West names as "Bear River" Tom Smith, Charlie Siringo, Bill Tilghman, and "Wild Bill" Hickok. Men such as these may not have always stayed within the law — but very often they were the law in the wild towns they tamed.

In history, just as in the preface to this adventure, town tamers were usually sought out by a town council or citizens' committee willing to pay well for their services. What "well" meant depended on how wealthy the townspeople were and, perhaps, on how good a job the

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tamers did. The incentive for player characters to attempt THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE is the promise of a reward — perhaps a grant of land, the claim to a silver strike, a cash payment, or a combination of all three. The amount and nature of the payment to player characters should be decided by the referee based on the needs and desires of those characters. The reward may be specified beforehand, as part of the background information that will be provided to the players, or it may be left vague until the characters reach Brimstone and make contact with Gil McCurdy at his saloon.

The referee must decide exactly how much background to give the player characters. They may be told virtually all of the facts about Brimstone given in the preface above, or certain minor pieces of information may be withheld (perhaps to be learned later from one of the townspeople or outlaws they will encounter). It stands to reason that most of the story of Brimstone as related in the preface would be common knowledge in many surrounding towns, with those who have left or escaped the town having spread the word for the last several weeks. It is assumed the player characters are approaching Brimstone from the east, following the railroad line to the town. If

Brimstone is given a place on a campaign map, the direction of the railroad route and the direction from which the characters approach may be changed to fit the surrounding terrain.

Typical characters

The player characters will meet many special, individual non-player characters during the adventure. But most of the population of Brimstone is made up of "typical characters" of one type or another. The following chart, derived from the one given in BOOT HILL module B1, *Mad Mesa*, lists the major attributes of typical characters and shows what weapon(s) each might be carrying. Using this chart to "create" the customers in a saloon, residents of a rooming house, or the makeup of any mixed group of people will save the referee the time and trouble of rolling attributes for each character. To use the "weapon selection" part of the chart, roll d% and refer to the appropriate column for each individual "typical character." Some of the character types listed on the chart in the module are deleted here, since certain types (lawman, Indian brave, etc.) would only be rarely encountered — if at all — in a place like Brimstone.

Abbreviations in the chart headings

are read as follows: SAR = single action revolver; R = rifle; BAC = base gun accuracy; STR = numerical Strength rating; BRV = Bravery rating; BSP = base speed addition because of characteristics. Abbreviations for weapon names are taken from the Price List in the BOOT HILL rule book. Unless otherwise specified, all revolvers are of the 6-shot variety.

Crimes, criminals, and victims

The crimes committed in Brimstone after the arrival of the town tamers, and the perpetrators and the victims of those crimes, are determined by the use of the following tables. The Frequency table shows what sort of crime has been committed, depending on the result of a dice roll that is modified according to how many "steps" have been taken toward taming the town. The Criminal table determines whether or not a special NPC committed the crime in question, and the Victim table defines who was the victim of the act.

(Note that arson and disturbing the peace don't necessarily have "victims" in the same way that other crimes do. The victim of an act of arson is the building rolled for the location of the crime; see the following paragraph on determining location. The victim of a disturbance of the peace is, technically, anyone who was a witness to the act. If a roll on the Frequency table yields either an "arson" or "disturbing the peace" result, no roll on the Victim table is necessary.)

The location of a crime is determined

Character type

Townfolk
Cowboy

Miner

Logger/
tracklayer

Homesteader

Greenhorn

Drifter

Bandit/
outlaw

SAR +6
+13

R -5
0

BAC 50%
60%

STR 13
15

BRV 30%
60%

BSP 0
5

01-25 KN
KN
CWC

2 DAR5
KN

2 SAR
KN

0 SAR

-2 SAR

2 SAR

8 SAR
9R

+6
+13

-5
0

50%
60%

13
15

30%
60%

0
5

KN
KN
CWC

2
KN

2
KN

0

-2

2

8

+10
+10
+8
+6
+10
+16

-3
-3
-5
-7
-3
+3

50%
50%
50%
40%
50%
65%

15
15
13
13
14
14

50%
55%
30%
20%
40%
65%

2
2
0
-2
2
8

DAR5
KN
SAR
KN
SAR
SAR
9R

Weapon selection

26-50 51-75 76-00

2D SAR 9R

SAR 2-SAR SAR

9R 9R 15R

KN KN KN

A R BR 15R

E R LBR KN

SAR 9R 9C

KN 20 SAR

KN KN

2D 6C BR

2D KN K N

KN LBR ER

1D KN

CWC DAR AR

KN KN SAR

2-SAR FDR 2SG

9C 15R FDR

Frequency table

Crime Frequency

Murder 01-25

Attempted murder 26-35

Manslaughter 36-45

Robbery 46-55

Arson 56-60

Assault 61-75

Disturbing the peace . . . 76-00

"Step" modifiers: Dice rolls taken on the Frequency table are usually adjusted up or down in conjunction with the "step" designating the current crime situation in Brimstone. These graduations range from Step 1 (when Brimstone is at its wildest and deadliest) to Step 7 (when the town is, for all practical purposes, tamed). The modifiers are as follows:

at Step 1: -30 at Step 5: +10

at Step 2: -20 at Step 6: +20

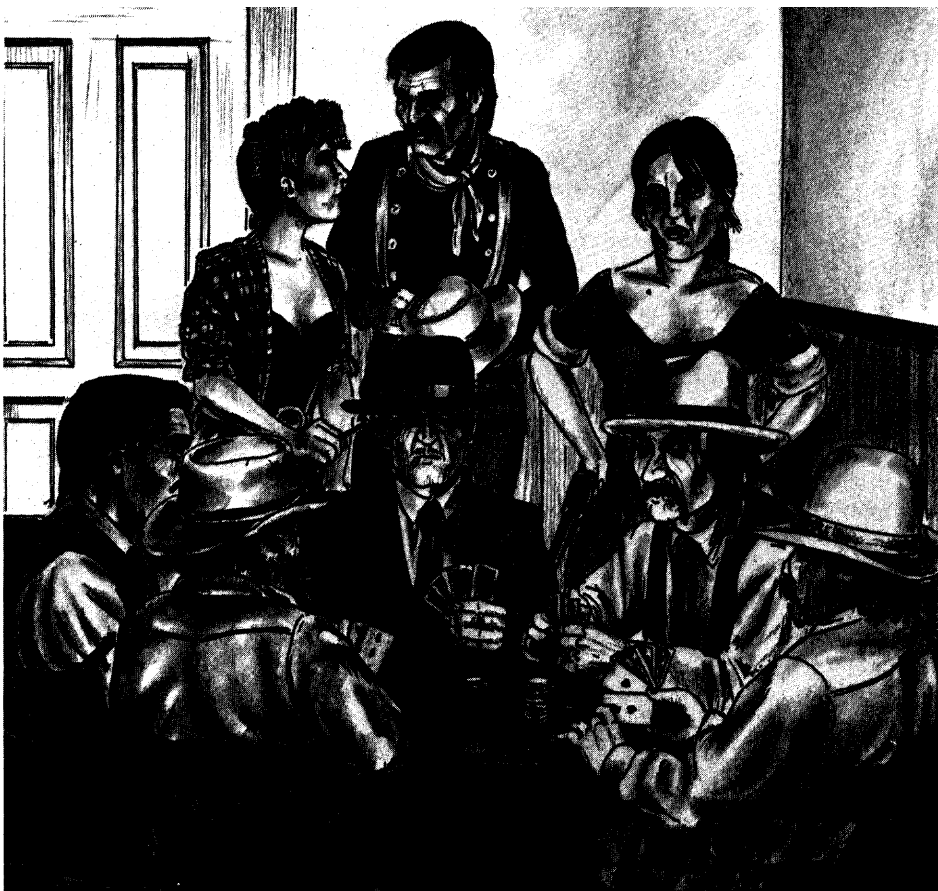
at Step 3: -10 at Step 7: +30

at Step 4: no modification

With the step modifiers in use, the probability of a murder taking place at Step 1 is increased to 55% instead of 25%, and a crime result of "disturbing the peace" is not possible (not because it doesn't happen, but because the town tamers have much more serious things to worry about). At the other end of the scale, there is no possibility of a "random murder" when the crime situation is at Step 7, and disturbing the peace is much more common than any other crime.

How often crimes occur in Brimstone depends on what the crime situation is at a given time. When the town is at Step 1 or Step 2, the number of crimes committed per day is equal to the number of player characters who started the adventure. At Steps 3, 4, and 5, three crimes are committed per day. At Steps 6 and 7, the frequency of crimes drops to two incidents per day. The referee should roll on the Frequency table, and other tables as applicable, the specified number of times per day.

The time of day or night that a crime occurs is determined by rolling percentile dice and translating the result into an hour by dividing the number by four and



rounding up to the nearest whole number. (To keep the results within the range of a 24-hour clock, the referee should ignore results of 97-00 and roll again whenever such a result is obtained.) Example: A roll of 53 for the "crime time" means that the incident occurs at 2 p.m. (1400 hours) on the day in question, since 53 divided by four is 13.25, which rounds up to 14. Optionally, the referee may elect to eliminate the rounding-up procedure and use the "crime time" result as expressed in hours and minutes. In this case, a roll of 53 would indicate that a crime occurs at 1:15 p.m.

Criminal table

| d% roll | Criminal |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 01-70 | Special NPC |
| 71-00 | Typical bandit/outlaw |

On a result of "Special NPC," the crime was committed by a special character (see the list in the following text) who happened to be at the crime location. If more than one special NPC is present at the scene of a crime, assign equal probabilities to all those present and determine the criminal randomly from among the choices.

On a result of "Typical bandit/outlaw," the crime was committed by a "nameless" criminal who happened to be at the crime location. This result also applies in cases where no special NPC is at the scene of a crime. Assign attributes and weapon(s) to the criminal as per the above section on "Typical characters."

Victim table

| d% roll | Victim |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 01-70 | Typical character |
| 71-90 | Special NPC |
| 91-00 | Owner or proprietor of crime location |

On a result of "Typical character," the victim of the crime was a "nameless" town resident, cowboy, or other character drawn from the "Typical character" chart.

On a result of "Special NPC," the victim was a special character who happened to be present at the scene of the crime. Roll randomly to choose between multiple special characters in the same location, as described above. If this result is obtained and no special NPC is present, treat it as a result of "Typical character."

On a result of "Owner or proprietor," the victim is the NPC who owns or runs the building or establishment where the crime occurred. Obviously, this result can only apply once for any given location if it pertains to a crime of murder or manslaughter. (A person can be the victim of more than one robbery, even though attempts after the first might not yield the criminal any loot.) If the dice rolls indicate the killing of an owner or proprietor who has already died, the referee must roll again to obtain a meaningful result.

To use this crime-determination system most effectively, the referee should pre-generate the events for an entire day at the beginning of that 24-hour period, so that he or she will know ahead of time when and where all the crimes "scheduled for that day will occur. On the day the player characters arrive in Brimstone, the referee should adjust the frequency and time-of-day rolls for the length of time remaining in that day: If the town tamers ride into Brimstone at high noon, for instance, there will be half the usual number of crimes during the rest of that day (since only 12 hours remain in the day), and all of those incidents will occur between noon and midnight.

In the context of the adventure, other crimes may occur besides those called for by the use of the system described above; it is entirely possible, for instance, that a player character will be the victim of a murder, attempted murder, or assault because of actions taken by the player characters and NPCs when the town tamers try to eliminate or apprehend a criminal. "Special crimes" of this nature are not necessarily considered when determining whether the crime situation of the town changes (see the following section), although certain events, such as the killing or wounding of a town tamer, will certainly have a bearing on how successful the player characters are.

How to tame the town

THE TAMING OF BRIMSTONE is accomplished in steps, as outlined briefly under the Frequency table above. The player characters are considered to have completed the adventure successfully if the crime situation improves to Step 7 and maintains that status for seven full days thereafter.

The adventure begins at Step 1 when the town tamers come on the scene. For the sake of added realism (and perhaps a shorter adventure), the referee can start at Step 2 if at least one town tamer with experience of 10 or higher is in the player-character group at the start of the adventure.

The crime situation is improved by one step (to a higher number, but never higher than 7) at the end of any day when one of these conditions were met:

1. All who committed crimes in the previous two days were apprehended or killed as a result of the town tamers' pursuit of them after those crimes.
2. Any two special NPCs whose names are marked with asterisks (see the descriptions below) are caught or killed as a result of crimes they committed.
3. A special condition, as outlined in some of the descriptions of special NPCs, is met.
4. A period of 4 days has elapsed without any player characters being killed or forced to leave town.

The crime situation is worsened by one step (to a lower number, but never lower than 1) at the end of any day when one of these conditions were met:

5. A player character has been killed, incapacitated, or forced to leave town.

6. A non-player character, special or typical, who has not committed a crime since the start of the adventure is killed or taken into custody.

7. A non-player character, special or typical, has remained at large for at least two full days after committing a crime.

8. A period of three full days has elapsed without any criminals being caught or killed.

No more than one step can be gained or lost in one day. The results of different conditions may cancel each other out; for instance, the crime situation would remain unchanged after a day in which conditions 1 and 6 were both met. If more than two conditions are met, the net result is considered: If conditions 1, 5, and 6 were all met in a single day, the crime situation would be worsened by one step.

"Crime," as defined in the conditions, refers only to incidents of lawbreaking called for by use of the Frequency table — not to any other crimes that may be committed while town tamers are in pursuit of someone.

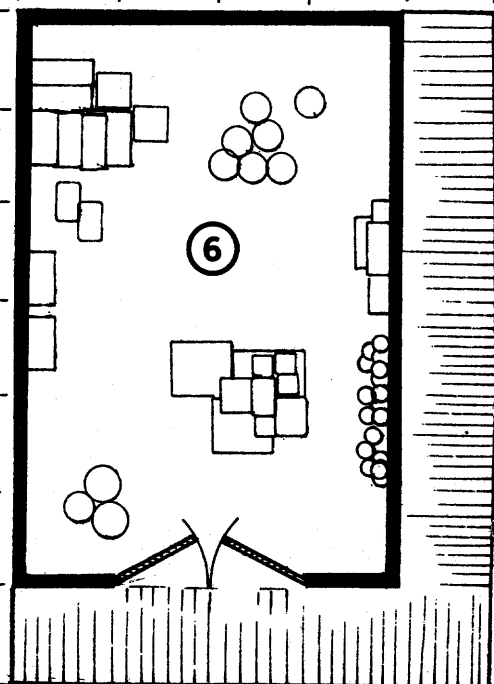
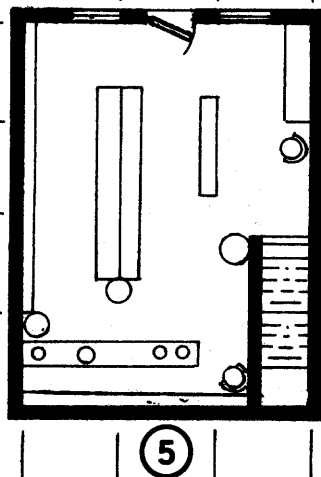
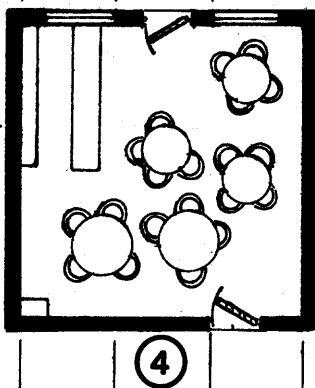
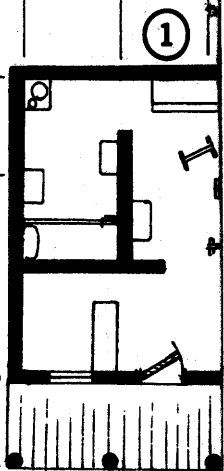
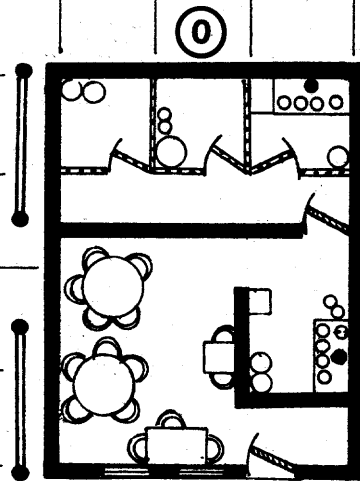
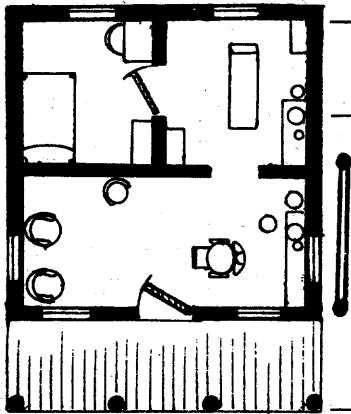
Special non-player characters

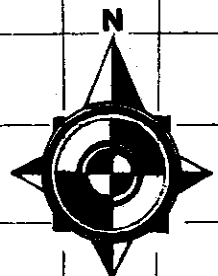
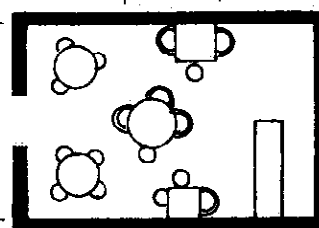
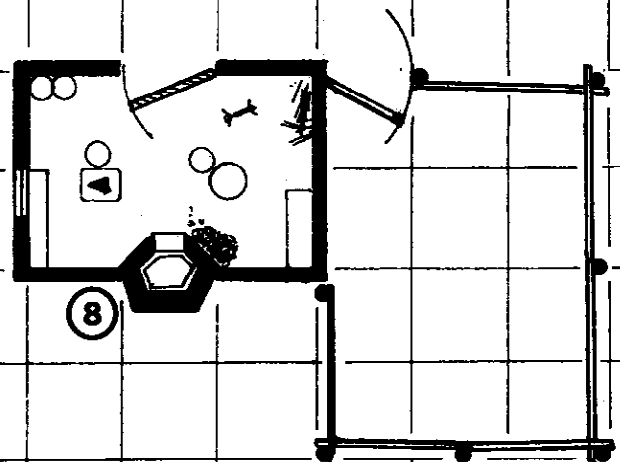
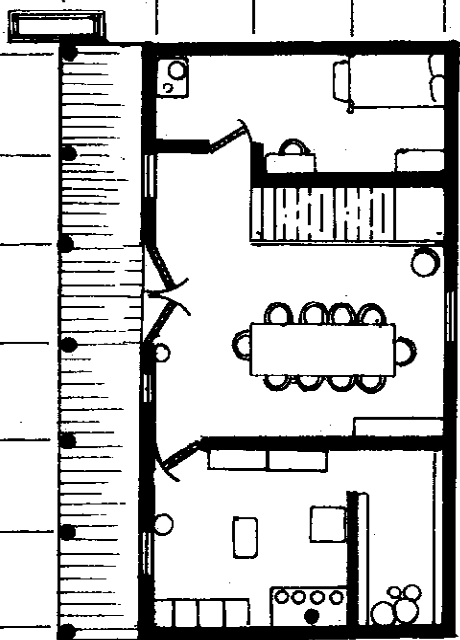
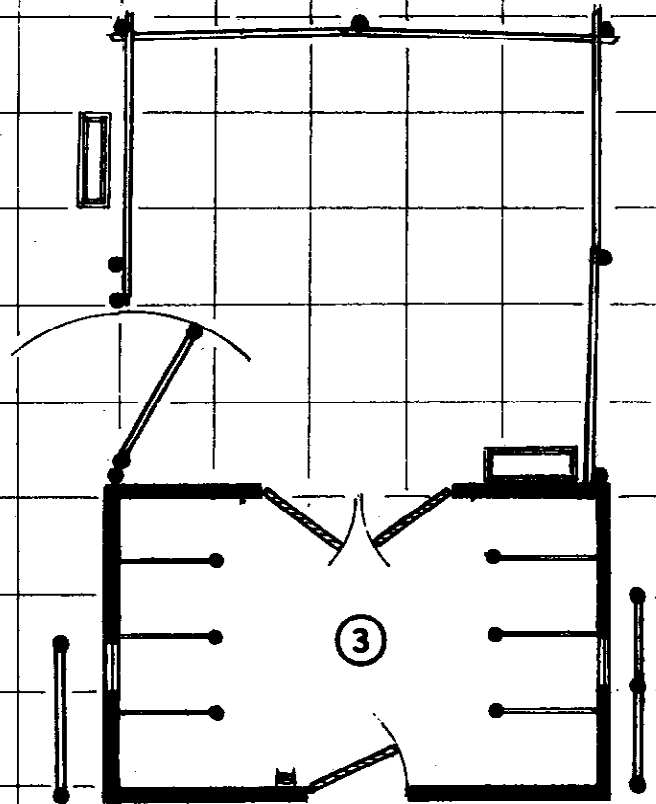
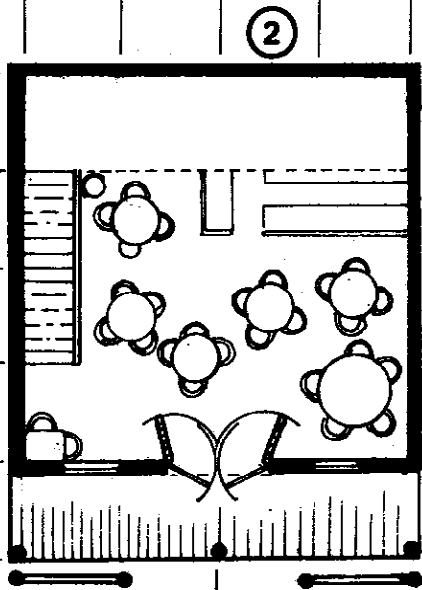
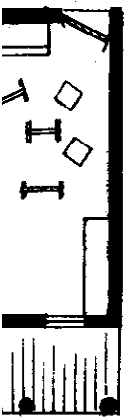
The most powerful and potentially most dangerous non-player characters in Brimstone are described below. The referee should make every attempt to role-play these characters according to their personal descriptions, and according to the way a fugitive would act after committing a crime. For instance, no NPC would make a stand in the open against a group of player characters and attempt to shoot it out — unless something in a character's personal description indicates that he, in a certain situation, would be an exception to this.

No non-player character, special or typical, will voluntarily leave town (by moving out of the area shown on the map), except for Shotgun Slay. But — as the town tamers will quickly find out — there are plenty of places to hide inside Brimstone itself.

Statistics and attributes for special NPCs appear in abbreviated form at the start of each description. Each NPC's name is followed immediately by an abbreviation for his preferred weapon and a number which represents his base speed when using that weapon. The abbreviations for attributes should be read as follows: BAC = base percentage chance to hit with the weapon specified; STR = numerical Strength rating; BRV = Bravery rating (base percentage chance to stand up under pressure).

This page and the one backing the other half of the map of Brimstone have been left blank so the map can be removed from the center of this magazine and spread out flat for use by the referee and player characters. Once the player characters arrive in Brimstone (and perhaps make a short trip around town to familiarize themselves with the place), the referee can reveal the entire town map to them without giving away any important information.





1 square = 6 feet

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As noted earlier under "How to tame the town," the killing or capture of any special NPC with an asterisk preceding his name may contribute to the improvement of the crime situation. Certain descriptions also mention special conditions that, if they occur, will have an effect on the crime rate.

Shotgun Slay SCG +6; BAC 95%; STR 16; BRV 96%. He carries two scatter guns, one holstered on each hip, and two bandoliers with 25 shells each criss-crossed over his chest. His scatter guns are each 12 inches long, with rounded pistol grips where the stocks used to be. He needs two hands to aim and fire each gun, and cannot use both of them at one time without a great reduction in his accuracy.

Slay will avoid a shootout with any town tamers if at all possible, but otherwise there is little in the way of violence and criminal activity he is not capable of. Although Slay is the leader of a small gang, he occasionally comes into town alone. No townspeople or other NPCs will give him any trouble because they fear not only his revenge but the revenge of the outlaws he rides with.

If Slay is beaten up by the town tamers or has his weapons confiscated, he will get on his horse and ride out of town shouting "I'll never set foot in Brimstone again!" If he is arrested and confined by the player characters, Slay will try to bargain for his release by making the same promise not to return. In addition to his other undesirable traits, Shotgun Slay is a liar: On the third night after he rides out, he will return with the members of his gang. They are:

Josh McCord FDR6 +22; BAC 68%; STR 17; BRV 58%.

Clint Jones 15R -3; BAC 47%; STR 13; BRV 34%.

Sam Jones 15R -1; BAC 57%; STR 14; BRV 07%.

Don Malte 2SG +10; BAC 77%; STR 17; BRV 32%.

Although they aren't the bravest bunch of outlaws in these parts, Slay's boys are cold-blooded killers, and they will almost always stay in a group wherever they go. As long as Shotgun Slay or Josh McCord is alive and with the group, none of them needs to make a morale check.

If Shotgun Slay is killed before he gets a chance to leave town, or if he is kept imprisoned for more than five full days, these four men will ride into town on the second day thereafter, seeking to rescue him or avenge his death.

If Slay rides back into town with his men, they will be planning to ambush the town tamers at night, and all five of them will try to do so at the earliest opportunity. In normal circumstances, Slay will spend from midnight to noon each day either at the boarding house (location 7) or getting a meal at the cafe (location 0). If his men have come to town, all four of



them will be camped together somewhere north of Brimstone. They will join Slay at McCurdy's Saloon (location 2) every afternoon, and all five of them will stay there until nightfall or later.

The crime situation will automatically improve by one step (to a higher number) at the end of a day when Slay is killed or imprisoned or leaves town. It will not automatically worsen by one step when his gang comes to town, but the events that follow might cause that to happen very shortly anyway.

Shaun McTosh KN +11; BAC 55%; STR 18; BRV 71%. He is the "ringleader" of the railroad workers, a burly brawler who loves to drink and gamble and is respected and feared by the other tracklayers. Shaun will arrive in town at noon on the day after the player characters' arrival, and thereafter will alternate three days in town and three days away (back working his shift at the railroad site several miles to the west). He spends most of his time, day and night, in the tent saloon (location 9) by the tracks.

In addition to Shaun, there will be 20 off-duty tracklayers in town at any time. They are boisterous and occasionally violent, but generally keep to themselves, traveling only between the tent saloon, the warehouse (location 6), and the cafe.

Shaun is not necessarily a criminal, and is not especially unreasonable. The player characters may be able to strike a deal with him to keep his men under control — a bargain that will be honored even while Shaun is out of town. If such a deal is struck, the crime situation will improve (to one number higher) at the end of that day. If Shaun is killed or imprisoned by the town tamers, the crime situation will worsen by one step at the end of that day, and all "typical tracklayer" NPCs will have their Bravery ratings raised from 55% to 75% for the duration of the adventure.

Mike McAllister SAR6 +10; BAC 37%; STR 12; BRV 51%. Mike, a new arrival in town, is a pyromaniac. He's a mild-mannered enough fellow until he's harassed or irritated, whereupon he will promptly try to put the torch to some place.

Mike spends most of his waking hours at Kate's Place (location 4) sipping brandy and trying to make ends meet by selling items of pewter from his sample case. He will not commit any crime other than arson for as long as he is alive and in town — but if a result of "arson" is obtained on the Frequency table, there is an 80% chance that Mike is the culprit. If Mike is killed or run out of town, the chance of arson being committed anytime thereafter is reduced by half. (On a result of "arson," roll d% again; this time, a result of 01-50 means that the crime is assault instead of arson.)

If Mike is ever the victim of a crime other than murder or manslaughter, he will seek revenge on the following day against the one who committed that crime. In such a case, one of the pre-generated crimes for that day will automatically be arson, and the location of the fire will be the building in which Mike's enemy is located. Mike will only attempt revenge once for any time he is injured or bothered in this manner; although he likes to set fires, he also likes not getting caught, and he won't press his luck.

***Billy Gaston** KN+17; BAC 50%; STR 14; BRV 61%. Billy, a typical young roughneck, hangs out at McCurdy's Saloon most of the time but is 10% likely to be inside any other building in town at a particular time (for instance, when a crime occurs).

Billy fancies himself to be a superior knife-handler and is eager to make a reputation: the second time any player characters (individually or in a group) enter McCurdy's Saloon, Billy will attempt to goad one of them into pulling his gun so that he can throw his knife in "self defense." If a conflict occurs as a result of this confrontation, the referee should treat it as a case of attempted murder (or worse) on Billy's part, then delete one of the pre-generated crimes

for that day, and moderate the consequences of the incident accordingly.

***Sam Lyons** D2+7; BAC 63%; STR 16; BRV 51%. Sam, a little more cautious and a little younger than Billy Gaston, hangs out with Billy. The pair will be found together 60% of the time Billy is away from McCurdy's, and Sam will always be with Billy when the latter is in McCurdy's. If Billy succeeds in getting one of the town tamers to pull his gun, there is a 50% chance that Sam will immediately dart for the door, pausing on his way out to fire one shot from his derringer at the lawman threatening his friend.

***Jesse Turner** FDR6 +8; BAC 50%; STR 9; BRV 82%. Jesse is a headstrong young man whose courage sometimes verges on foolhardiness. He hopes to land a job as a guard at the "bank" inside McCurdy's Saloon, proving his worthiness by out-drawing someone who looks like an easy target. He will be in the saloon every day and half the night, only absent from the premises for more than half an hour when he's asleep (from 2 a.m. to 9 a.m.) at his campsite east of town.

Jesse may decide to challenge one of the town tamers to a showdown, but only after sizing up the competition for a while. He will wait until at least the fourth full day after the player characters arrive before picking out a target, and his intended victim will be the player character who seems the least courageous or the slowest on the draw in the group. There is a 30% chance that Jesse will issue such a challenge on every occasion when his intended target enters McCurdy's Saloon on the fourth full day of the adventure or thereafter.

Jesse is desperate for money, and if he can't get it any other way he'll try robbery. Every time a roll on the Frequency table indicates the occurrence of a robbery, there is a 20% chance that Jesse is the culprit — if Roberto Gomez is not the robber; roll Roberto's chance (see his description) first. This 20% chance only applies until Jesse commits his first robbery; afterward, his chance to be the culprit is determined normally.

***Tom Curry** SAR6+17; BAC 50%; STR 14; BRV 28%. Tom is a quiet sort most of the time and will never take any chances with his life or well-being, but he can be belligerent and violent when he thinks he has no other choice. He has a part-time job at the blacksmith shop (location 8) in the mornings (8 a.m. to noon), and stays at the boarding house at night (11 p.m. to 8 a.m.). The rest of the time he's liable to be found sitting quiet and alone at a table in Kate's Place.

***Sam Gallz** FDR6+28; BAC 57%; STR 13; BRV 16%. Sam will tell anyone who cares to listen that he's just about the

fastest gun alive — but will change his mind in a hurry if anyone takes him up on his boast. For this reason, he usually stays away from the saloons except when they are least busy (from 8 a.m. to noon), and divides his time evenly between McCurdy's and Kate's. For much of the rest of the day he will saunter around in the vicinity of the cafe and the general store (location 5) trying to intimidate and impress passers-by. He spends his nights (9 p.m. to 8 a.m.) in his tent, which is pitched in back of the carpenter's shop.

***Juan Martin** KN +7; BAC 68%; STR 13; BRV 58%. Juan doesn't carry a gun, and for that reason he isn't considered a threat by the other would-be criminals in town. But railroad workers coming to Brimstone for the first time would do well to steer clear of him; Juan's favorite pastime is hanging around outside the tent saloon waiting to stab someone, or threaten to stab someone, and then make off with his money. Sometimes he takes his talents to a different part of town: If a result of "assault" is obtained on the Frequency table, there is a 30% chance that Juan is the culprit, regardless of the location of the crime or the time of day. This 30% chance only applies until Juan has committed one assault; after that, his chance to be involved in a crime is determined normally.

***Jimmy Watts** FDR6 +10; BAC 42%; STR 11; BRV 39%. Jimmy is a fugitive, and true to his character he spends most of his time holed up. He stores his sleeping gear and other personal belongings in a nook in a corner of a storage area in the carpenter's shop, only venturing out for meals and a drink or two at odd hours when he thinks the cafe and Kate's Place won't be too busy.

The territory of New Mexico has put a \$500 price on Billy's head — dead or alive — for robbery and murder. Although he would just as soon keep a low profile and stay out of trouble until things cool down, he will not hesitate to commit a violent act if it seems like the only way to keep his identity secret from the town tamers. Each of the town tamers has a chance of 10% times his experience to recognize Jimmy on first sight, and the player characters may decide to try to kill or capture him, but this killing or capturing can only count toward the taming of Brimstone if Jimmy has committed a crime since the town tamers arrived.

***Roberto Gomez** CBR +15; BAC 45%; STR 17; BRV 52%. Roberto spends half his waking hours hanging out in the lobby of the boarding house, watching for people passing through town whom he can take advantage of — either by engaging them in a card game or by knocking them over the head with his revolver and lifting their wallets. Once he

has latched onto a likely victim, he will either take his "friend" to McCurdy's or will follow the would-be victim around town, waiting for an opportunity to strike. On a result of "robbery" on the Frequency table, there is a 25% chance that Roberto is the culprit, regardless of where the crime is committed. This 25% chance only applies until Roberto commits his first robbery, after which his chance to be involved is determined normally.

General notes on special NPCs

The special NPC character descriptions given above do not account for every NPC's whereabouts at any particular time of day, but do illustrate general tendencies. The referee should assume that most special NPCs, just like other townspeople and typical characters, will move around during the course of a day. Thus, there is a possibility that (for instance) Jesse Turner will be at the blacksmith's shop when a crime occurs at that location. These possibilities can be assigned subjectively by the referee — "tossing in" a special NPC here and there to keep things lively — or they can be determined objectively by rolling dice, giving perhaps a 5% chance for any individual special NPC to be at a predetermined crime location. The referee should remember that just because a special NPC is at a crime location doesn't mean that individual committed the crime. However, many of the special NPCs would have good reason (in their minds) to fear a direct confrontation with the town tamers, even if they aren't involved in the crime that's being investigated.

Special NPCs should not usually be singled out for special attention by the referee (thus bringing them to the attention of the player characters) unless and until they do something to warrant such attention. For example, Tom Curry will appear to be just another saloon customer to a player character who has just walked into Kate's Place; unless he has committed a crime or is approached to be questioned about something, he probably won't do anything to cause himself to stand out in the crowd. Two important exceptions to this guideline are Shotgun Slay and Shaun McTosh, whose appearance and mannerisms *will* cause them to be immediately singled out by any observer.

The referee's imagination and ingenuity will perhaps be tested most severely after special NPCs commit crimes and try to go into hiding. A criminal on the run can be very ingenious. . . . The most important thing for the referee to remember at all times is to role-play each special NPC in the manner that seems most appropriate for that character's personality and for the circumstances of the present situation. No set of rules or guidelines can hope to account for all the events that might unfold.

THE TOWN OF BRIMSTONE

The “business district” of Brimstone is shown on the map accompanying this text. Apart from these 11 large buildings and two fenced-in corrals, several tents and shanties dot the surrounding landscape, particularly to the north and west (in areas not pictured on the map). As mentioned earlier, no special NPCs will voluntarily leave town (except for Shotgun Slay, who doesn’t mean what he says). However, several of them will spend their sleeping hours in these tents and primitive shacks, not within the area covered by the map. If this area is to have a part in the adventure, the referee must extend the boundaries of the map to account for them and determine the locations of the residences before action moves into that area. As a general rule, it would be unwise (if not downright foolish) for player characters to try to explore this area, unless they are in pursuit of a fleeing criminal or unless they need information so urgently that they can’t wait for a certain individual to come back to town in the morning.

The large buildings in Brimstone are described in the following text. Except for the barber shop/doctor’s office, each of them is identified by a single-digit number to be used when the referee must randomly determine a crime location. Crimes can occur in the area immediately around a building (such as in the corrals adjacent to the livery stable and the blacksmith shop, or in an alleyway between two buildings), or inside a structure. It is up to the referee to decide exactly where, and under exactly what circumstances, a crime is committed.

Barber shop/doctor’s office

This building, located in an unofficial “no man’s land” at the west edge of town, is where Jason Scott goes about the business of keeping the people of Brimstone shaved, trimmed, and patched up. He never turns away a customer or a patient. Whether or not he actually has a doctor’s degree is of little consequence to the people he serves; all they know is that he seems to be able to keep them healthy and in one piece. And in return for that service, the bad guys of Brimstone have agreed among themselves to leave Doc Scott and his place of business alone.

Jason Scott (STR 11) is not armed. He does not want to antagonize anyone, but he is in favor of what the town tamers are trying to do. If he’s pressed for information, he will tell the player characters that Shotgun Slay is the biggest troublemaker in town, and he has heard rumors about a gang of men that Slay bosses, but doesn’t believe them to be in the area.

0. Hoffman’s Cafe

This establishment is located in what used to be Brimstone’s jail and sheriff’s office. Fred Hoffman (STR 11) and his wife Cindy (STR 10) got the approval of

the citizens’ committee to move in and turn the place into a cafe after the sheriff’s job became vacant. Cathy Jones (STR 10) was hired as a waitress and kitchen help, and the three of them have managed to make the business reasonably profitable. None of them carry any weapons. Fred keeps \$30 in a drawer in the kitchen and stores the rest of his proceeds in the “bank” in McCurdy’s Saloon.

The cafe has a kitchen walled off from the eating area, and there are living quarters upstairs for the Hoffmans and Cathy. The building also contains three jail cells with iron-bar doors. The locks have been removed from the doors and are nowhere to be found, and the insides of the cells are used for a pantry and storage area. The cells may be usable to hold prisoners if the town tamers can gain the assistance of the Hoffmans, and if they can obtain some chains and padlocks to keep the doors closed.

1. Wilson’s Carpenter Shop

Robert Wilson (FDR6+8; 15R -7; BAC 61%; STR 12; BRV 65%) runs this shop with the help of his son Billy (STR 14). They turn out finished wood items for sale, and will also sell raw materials (lumber, nails, etc.) to anyone who’s interested. Robert keeps his FDR under the counter in the front of the shop and stores his rifle in the back of the building, which doubles as a workshop and living quarters. There is a 75% chance that Billy will be tending the store at any time during business hours (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.) while his father is in back working.

Robert Wilson is a member of the Brimstone citizens’ committee. Like all the other members, he doesn’t want this fact broadcast too loudly around town. He will be glad to see the arrival of the town tamers and will do whatever he can to help them in their effort as long as it doesn’t involve gunplay. He keeps a tidy sum of cash (\$50 or \$100; 50% chance for each) inside a strongbox under his workbench.

2. McCurdy’s Saloon

This is the biggest and the busiest place in town. The owner and proprietor, Gil McCurdy (STR 13), appears to be loud and raucous, with manners little better than those of the people his saloon serves. His behavior is actually just a “cover” that helps keep him in good standing with all the rough characters in town. If the player characters can ever get him alone for a conversation, they’ll find him to be pleasant, well-meaning, and very nervous. Gil McCurdy is the leader of Brimstone’s citizens’ committee, and he is vitally interested in cleaning up the town so that he and his business can survive and prosper. He will be able to provide player characters with details of the reward they can expect for taming the town, if no such details were previously made known to them.

The only unusual aspect of McCurdy’s Saloon is a locked and heavily guarded room at the back of the second floor. This room has served as Brimstone’s unofficial “bank” since the early days of the town. Keeping a lot of money in the vicinity of so many criminal types might seem like a foolish thing to do, but the criminals all realize that “their” town needs money to pay for supplies — and they can always meet their immediate financial needs by knocking someone over the head and making off with his wallet. “Making money” in this fashion is much more attractive to them than challenging the guns of McCurdy’s guards. Also, none of the bad guys in town want to see any other bad guy make *this* much money *this* quickly. Only twice in the town’s history have men tried to gun down a guard and rob the bank, and on each occasion they were filled full of bullet holes — not only by the guard, but by quite a few of the saloon’s patrons — before they had even made it to the locked door.

The guards are Tom Blandin (SCG +6; BAC 78%; STR 16; BRV 80%), Jim Morris (SCG +13; BAC 92%; STR 13; BRV 93%), Al Rolins (15R +10; BAC 98%; STR 16; BRV 89%), and Dave Miles (15R +20; BAC 87%; STR 16; BRV 93%). Two of these men (one with a scatter gun and one with a rifle) will be on duty at any time of the day or night.

Either Al Rolins or Dave Miles will be seated on a chair outside the bank door, near a balcony overlooking the ground floor of the saloon and in plain sight of the only flight of stairs. Anyone who comes more than halfway up the stairs will be told to halt and state their business before (perhaps) being allowed to continue. Gil McCurdy’s living quarters are also on the second floor of the saloon, and the owner does occasionally receive visitors there (usually merchants who want to make a deposit) — but only if he knows they’re coming and has alerted the guards to let the visitors pass.

Either Tom Blandin or Jim Morris will be stationed inside the locked room, with orders to fire immediately — through the door — if anyone tries to open the door before giving the secret signal. The signal being used at the start of the adventure is two short raps on the door, followed by the password “Winifred” (the name of Gil McCurdy’s mother), followed by three more short raps. The signal is known only to Gil McCurdy and the guards who are stationed inside the room. They change it every few days.

Inside the locked room is a small safe, too heavy to lift, containing \$1,000 in small-denomination bills at the start of the adventure. This amount is increased by \$100 to \$200 per day as new deposits are made. The bank is depleted of funds approximately once a month when shipments of supplies are hauled in from the east. The latest supply shipment was

received a week before the player characters arrived.

McCurdy's is open for business from early morning to well past midnight every day. The bartender is Danny Tucker (SCG -4; BAC 54%; STR 13; BRV 15%), who is on duty about 12 hours a day and is occasionally replaced or assisted by one of the off-duty guards at mealtime or when the place is especially busy.

3. Brimstone Livery Stable

John Stevens (SAR5 +11; BAC 50%; STR 13; BRV 36%) is the owner and proprietor. There is a 45% chance he will be working on the premises at any time. Otherwise, he may be (35%) in his living quarters in the northwest corner of the building or (20%) somewhere else in town. John puts up three stable hands who each work an 8-hour shift every day. They are Jack Westcott (KN +4; BAC 34%; STR 12; BRV 57%), Clyde Austin (D2 +6; BAC 50%; STR 16; BRV 35%) and Billy Samson (unarmed; STR 13; BRV 43%).

John Stevens is a member of the Brimstone citizens' committee. But he doesn't go looking for trouble, and he won't be eager to help anyone against the criminals for fear of endangering his business and his safety. His stable and corral are almost always full, but there always seems to be room for one more horse if a customer is willing to pay John's prices. Three horses (two good and one fair) are for sale, at twice the cost indicated on the Price List in the BOOT HILL rules. John keeps \$30 in a pouch under his bed, and on a busy day might make two or three trips to the bank to keep his cash-on-hand from growing too large.

4. Kate's Place

This is a somewhat run-down but very respectable drinking and gambling establishment, with emphasis on the gambling part. Kate James (SAR5 +2; BAC 40%; STR 12; BRV 55%) is the owner and proprietor, and the only woman member of the Brimstone citizens' committee. She is homely and gruff, and she hates customers cheating at her gambling tables even more than she dislikes having a fight break out at the bar. She and her employees don't have a lot of difficulty keeping order, and they prefer to cater to the quiet sort of customer who isn't inclined to bother anyone else.

The house dealer at Kate's is 8 skilled card-handler by the name of Seymour "Aces" Mills (FDR6 +16; D2 +11; BAC 50%; STR 8; BRV 25%). He has a Gambling Rating of 01.) "Aces" keeps his FDR in a holster fastened to the bottom of the table where he works, and packs a deringer to defend himself when he isn't at the table.

The bartender is a burly, surly character known simply as "Mister John" (LBR +6; BAC 57%; STR 19; BRV 90%) He is primarily responsible for keeping order

at Kate's Place, and he is usually able to do it without pulling the trigger of his LBR which is stored under the bar. He prefers to use the weapon as a club, taking advantage of the length of its barrel to bust heads if things start to get out of hand. And if he can't get to the weapon in time, Mister John can do a good job of busting heads with his bare fists.

Proceeds from the saloon are kept in a cash box in Kate's living quarters in the back of the building. The place takes in as much as \$100 on a busy day, and Kate makes a trip to the bank at least once every two days.

5. Simon & General Store

Jim Simons (SCG +5; BAC 60%; STR 13; BRV 34%) is the owner and proprietor. His wife Jenny (STR 10) tends the store 50% of the time, while Jim is upstairs in their living quarters or elsewhere in town.

Despite its record of efficiency and security, Jim doesn't trust the bank at McCurdy's. He prefers to keep his cash under his bed, where the SCG is also stored. The strongbox has \$200 in it the day the player characters arrive in town, and Jim puts another \$40 in it at the end of each business day. Jim is a member of the citizens' committee, but won't take any unnecessary chances on behalf of the town tamers. He is very concerned for his wife's safety and will protect her at all costs.

6. Railroad Warehouse

This is the largest building in town, and the only one with no windows. It is used to store construction materials that are transported to the track-laying site several miles to the west as needed, when railroad, workers change shifts. The caretaker is John Curtis (KN0; BAC 78%; STR 12; BRV 97%), who is not required to be inside all the time and spends about half his waking hours in the tent saloon nearby.

The warehouse is not filled to capacity by any means; there are several nooks and crannies in and around piles of crates where someone could hide for quite a while — if he is able to shoot off or otherwise break through the heavy lock on the doors. Presently, the warehouse contains 10 crates of miscellaneous tools such as picks, shovels, axes, hammers, tongs, and so forth; 10 crates of train-engine parts; 7 crates of rifles (50 to the crate), 3 crates of ammunition for the rifles, 10 barrels of oil, and 20 barrels of spikes. The guns and ammunition are in boxes disguised as tool crates, stored at the bottom of stacks of crates that really do contain tools. Only John Curtis and Shaun McTosh know of their existence.

John Curtis sleeps in the warehouse. For a price, he can be persuaded to let railroad workers and (for a higher price) perhaps other people to bed down among the crates at night.

7. Brimstone Boarding House

There are 18 single rooms for rent in this building, and only three of them are vacant when the town tamers arrive. The others are occupied by various special NPCs (see the personal descriptions given earlier) and typical characters. Alice Johnson (STR 9), an elderly woman, runs the place, but it is owned by Gil McCurdy. He watches out for her welfare by sending an off-duty guard across the street three or four times a day to check on her, and to transport to the bank any cash she may have taken in. There is never more than \$20 in Alice's possession at any time, and she keeps her money locked in a bureau drawer in her living quarters on the ground level of this two-story building.

8. Carson's Blacksmith Shop

Horseshoes and hardware are the specialties of blacksmith Andrew Carson (SCG +23; BAC 107%; STR 20; BRV 99%). He is normally a quiet man who cares only about doing good work and receiving fair payment for it — but if he is provoked, he will not hesitate to demonstrate his courage and his expertise with his SCG to anyone who crosses him. He works with a one-hand sledgehammer that he can throw with a speed and accuracy equal to his skill with his SCG.

Andrew can fashion two sets of chains and shackles in a day, if he is contracted to do so. He keeps his SCG on his workbench within arm's reach when he is there, and takes it with him to the loft of the livery stable when he retires there to sleep.

9. Tent saloon

This is the newest building in Brimstone, and it isn't really a building at all. The wooden walls of this structure are only about four feet high; canvas draped around a frame forms the upper part of the walls and the ceiling. Most of the time the canvas walls are rolled up to let in light, which also enables anyone to see inside the building from a distance away.

This structure was originally created as a "flop house" for off-duty railroad workers, and it still serves that purpose. But the workers have also chipped in to build and maintain a bar on the premises, so the tracklayers don't have to fraternize with the rest of the townspeople unless they want to. The caretaker and bartender is Frank Nash (STR 11), who prides himself on being quick with his fists. He keeps no more than \$50 in his pocket and stores the rest of the proceeds he gets in his room in the boarding house. The tent saloon is only open for business from noon to midnight, but will have at least 10 railroad workers inside at any hour of the day or night. The place has a narrow doorway, but no door across it; a canvas flap can be fastened in place to keep out bad weather or prying eyes. ❧



Solid answers to astral questions

by Roger E. Moore

Since the article on "The Astral Plane" appeared in issue #67 of DRAGON™ Magazine, a number of people have written to me or to Dragon Publishing Magazine with questions and suggestions concerning AD&D™ adventuring in astral space. Some additional thoughts on the subject have come to me as well; this edition of "Sage Advice" concerns the Astral Plane and various aspects of getting around thereon.

A few things need to be said before the questions start coming. First: the thank-you's. A number of people helped produce the original article on the Astral Plane and should be recognized. Georgia Moore, Marc Cocherl, and Neal O'Koon proofread and reviewed the original draft; Neal got me to clarify the wound-recovery problem in astral space. Norman Moore suggested some aspects of magical item alteration that were incorporated into the article. Kim Mohan did a superb job of editing and clarifying the material, and Gary Gygax's comments and additions to the article were much appreciated. Thank you all.

Second: my sources. Putting the Astral Plane article together was difficult, since so little material on that environment was offered in the rule books. Most of the material in the article was extrapolated from the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, the *DEITIES & DEMIGODS™* Cyclopedia, AD&D Module Q1 (*Queen of the Demonweb Pits*), and from some research I had been doing in graduate school on the effects of weightlessness.

Third: the reason this follow-up article was prepared. Comments sent in to Dragon Publishing or to me were greatly appreciated, and went a long way toward further clarifying and making more logical and workable the current "astral model." Thanks to the following readers in particular: Nick Bennett, Brian Cluggish, Scott Grady, Peter Hare, Robert Konopelski, Joe Listopad, Steve March, Jeff Naiman, Russell Pflughaupt, Robert Stockdale, and Robert Weisberg.

The questions have been arranged by topic, much in the same way the original article was divided. Some general comments have been added as well where appropriate.

General Topics

Does the Astral Plane contact the Elemental Planes?

Not as far as can be told from the literature. It was pointed out by a questioner that if spell-users could summon walls of stone on the Astral Plane (as well as poison gas, water, and fireballs), then why not let them bring elementals as well? This was a hard point to resolve; it was assumed that the former sorts of spells do not necessarily draw power from the Elemental Planes, and that in casting such spells as *wall of stone*, *fireball*, etc., the spell caster is spontaneously creating material from nothing.

Others may point out that there are at least two known types of elementals — aerial servants and invisible stalkers — known to roam astral space. It could be conjectured that they got there by being summoned to the Prime Material Plane and then sent into astral space on some mission. They might also have been *gated* to astral space by their respective rulers on the elemental planes. Taking a cue from Module Q1, however, it appears that the elemental-conjuring spells are not powerful enough to bring elementals to the Astral Plane directly from their home planes. A spell caster might try to develop a different type of elemental-summoning spell that attracts elementals who happen to be on the same plane as the summoner (this would be good for getting aerial servants and invisible stalkers to come to you astrally) — but the referee should consider the possibility that such a spell would actually enrage the summoned creature if it saved against the spell, making it very likely that the creature would then seek out and attempt to slay the summoner.

If a spell caster just *has* to have an elemental on the Astral Plane, then a magic-user could summon an invisible stalker on the Prime Material Plane and command it to follow him into astral space while he uses some other means (spell, psionics, device, etc.) to get there. Or, characters could cast a *gate* spell, linked directly with the Elemental Planes (and the rulers thereof), and then could try to negotiate for the temporary use of an elemental or two. This could obviously be very expensive, as well as incredibly dangerous, so it isn't recommended.

In most cases, if an elemental is to be conjured, there must be a medium at the place of summoning in astral space appropriate to the type summoned (a water sphere for water elementals, stone or earth for earth elementals, or flame for fire elementals). Only air elementals would require no special medium to move through; they can travel naturally through astral space, just as aerial servants and invisible stalkers do.

* * *

How does one drink potions in a weightless condition?

Inventive characters can come up with many ways of circumventing the problems of weightlessness (see Gary Gygax's excellent suggestion for write spells in DRAGON #67.) Using normal potion bottles can be time-consuming, since the liquid contents will not naturally flow out of them all at once unless one shakes the bottle like we normally shake ketchup bottles; unfortunately, shaking a bottle makes it hard to drink the potion at the same time, and too much liquid may flow out at once, making the user choke. This may be simulated by stipulating that someone using a regular potion bottle needs 1-4 rounds to get a full dose of the fluid, and there is a 5% chance per round of drinking (non-cumulative) that the drinker chokes and loses all the potion's effects.

Squeezable bottles may be invented, similar to those used by astronauts and cosmonauts nowadays, so that the rate of flow of the liquid within can be controlled by the drinker. Potion drinking would take only one round, as usual, if such a bottle was used. Other systems might be devised involving straws, syringe-like pumps, and so forth, that would work just as well.

* * *

How is it possible to drown on the Astral Plane if characters do not need oxygen? Experiments have been conducted recently in which creatures have had one lung filled with water with no ill effects, and some animals have been fitted with artificial gills to enable them to breathe water easily.

For purposes of this model of the Astral Plane, it is assumed that astral characters do not need to breathe in order to stay alive but they must have their lungs clear of foreign material and exposed to the astral medium (the "air" of astral space.) The initial entry into astral space is sufficient to cause one's lungs to be filled with this medium, and from then on breathing is unnecessary. But if water gets into an air-breathing character's or creature's respiratory system, it will evenly coat (in this weightless environment) all of the system's air passages and prevent the astral medium from providing its life-sustaining qualities.

* * *

Okay, if you can drown on the Astral Plane, then can you prevent it by holding your nose?

This is assumed in the action of the saving throw vs. breath weapon to keep from drowning; success means the character was able to cover his/her nose and keep the mouth shut.

Inventive characters may develop nose plugs, but it is still suggested that a roll of 1 as a saving throw be a failure, indicating that the nose plugs came loose or fell out, or something else went wrong mechanically. Goggles would similarly help prevent blindness for someone caught in a dig spell's effects, but a saving throw of 1 would indicate that a piece of dirt found its way past the goggles, or whatever. Nothing's a sure thing.

* * *

Are people able to talk in astral space?

Yes. All one has to do is inhale the "air," or astral medium, and then speak normally while exhaling. Normal conversation can be heard up to 60 feet from a speaker, and shouted commands can reach 240 yards. The environment is permeated by a sound-deadening effect, resulting from the lack of anything to produce echoes and amplify the sounds made, so astral space seems abnormally silent. If one wanted to get complicated about it, one could set up rules which specify that the direction a speaker is facing makes a difference in how well he is heard, but this seems like too much work.

* * *

How are psionics and psionic powers affected by travelling the Astral Plane?

See DRAGON #67 for comments on *astral projection* and *probability travel*. As for other disciplines, *body equilibrium* affects the user as per a *feather fall* spell; *cell adjustment* allows healing astrally; *mind over body*, *suspend animation*, *dimension walk*, and *etherealness* have no effect if used astrally; and *teleportation* is described further as per the spell *teleport* in DRAGON #67 and in this article. All other psionic attacks, defenses, and disciplines function as normal or as similar magical spells do, as described in the original article. Psionic strength points are recovered at a varying rate, as follows: points recovered during hard exertion (fighting), none; when moving by mental effort, 6 pts/hour; when "floating" without thinking of moving, 12 pts/hour.

Astral Encounters

What other races of spell casters besides human may be encountered?

Very few. Elven wizards (11th-level magic-users) might be discovered using an *astral spell* from a scroll, but no demi-human clerics or spell casters of other sorts would likely be found. The DM may have an encounter take place with a party of NPC's that includes a 7th-level gnome illusionist (possibly multiclassed) who successfully used an *astral spell* from a scroll of illusionist spells. A party might also meet a high-level thief (10th or greater) of any race except half-orc, who also used some scroll spell to be taken to astral space, with or without partners. For all practical purposes, assume that 95% of all spell casters responsible for bringing a group to the Astral Plane are human. The other 5% may be set up as special encounters as the DM chooses, along the examples given above.

* * *

It was mentioned that insanity might be present in "special" encounters involving persons lost in astral space. How would this work?

In a way, floating around in the Astral Plane can be described as a form of sensory deprivation. There is little to look at, nothing to hear but oneself (if alone), and nothing to do if one is lost. Time becomes meaningless, and a second passed may seem like a year (or vice versa). If a lost NPC is encountered, he or she will be insane if a saving throw vs. magic (including wisdom bonuses) is failed prior to the encounter. Lost player characters, for simplicity's sake, are assumed to be immune to the insanity-producing effects of astral space, though the conditions may certainly make them uncomfortable. The most common sort of insanity found in lost astral travelers would likely be catatonia (as per the *Dungeon Masters Guide*).

* * *

What about lycanthropes?

Whether an NPC is a lycanthrope or not is up to the DM. However, lycanthropes will find it impossible to assume animal shape in astral space (there's no natural darkness), and will appear completely human if met.

Astral Traveling

When a cleric travels the Astral Plane, can his or her holy symbol be brought along without a magical aura being placed upon it?

No, unless the holy symbol itself is enchanted and has magical powers of its own. However, a cleric could cast a simple spell like *light* upon the symbol, which in essence causes it to radiate a magical aura and will allow it to be brought into astral space.

* * *

Can astral characters who are "adjacent" to another plane be seen by other inhabitants of astral space who are not "adjacent" to the same plane?

Yes. It would work something like this: Suppose a group of astral travelers is "adjacent" to an Outer Plane, looking it over. Approaching behind them is a shedu. From the shedu's viewpoint, the characters appear normal, except that they are slightly out of focus in its vision (since they have moved into the "borderland" between the planes). The characters will also appear to be looking around, viewing something the shedu cannot see since it is not also "adjacent" to the other plane.

The characters, if they turn around, will be able to see the shedu in the Astral Plane "behind" them, as well as get a further glimpse of the surroundings on the Outer Plane to which they

are "adjacent" (something like a double exposure on a piece of film). The shedu and the characters may interact, but neither will be able to affect any inhabitants on the "adjacent" Outer Plane unless certain special spells are used. A medusa, if one were present on the Outer Plane the characters are viewing, would be able to see the characters and attack them but could not see or attack the shedu.

Any area in astral space considered "adjacent" to another plane appears indistinguishable from any other area of the Astral Plane. Only the spell caster who initiated the traveling can find such a place. Any plane touching the Astral Plane may have several or many "adjacent spots" from which it may be entered from astral space.

Movement and Combat

If a magic-user has a familiar, how fast can the familiar travel astrally?

Familiars (but not pets) are assumed to be able to travel at a velocity based on the magic-user's intelligence if they are within 12" of the magic-user; beyond that range, they move at a rate based on their natural intelligence score. A minimum score of 2 (for a 2" movement rate) is suggested, even for a creature type of *animal* intelligence, since the Players Handbook says familiars are "abnormally intelligent."

* * *

If an astrally projecting character is wounded but survives to come back to his or her material body, is all the damage taken removed?

No. The psychic trauma of being wounded will still be present; though the material body will be unharmed, the person will appear exhausted and may possibly have sympathetic or imaginary pains in the parts of his or her body that received the

wounding. Normal recovery times apply, and magical spells or potions may be used to restore lost hit points.

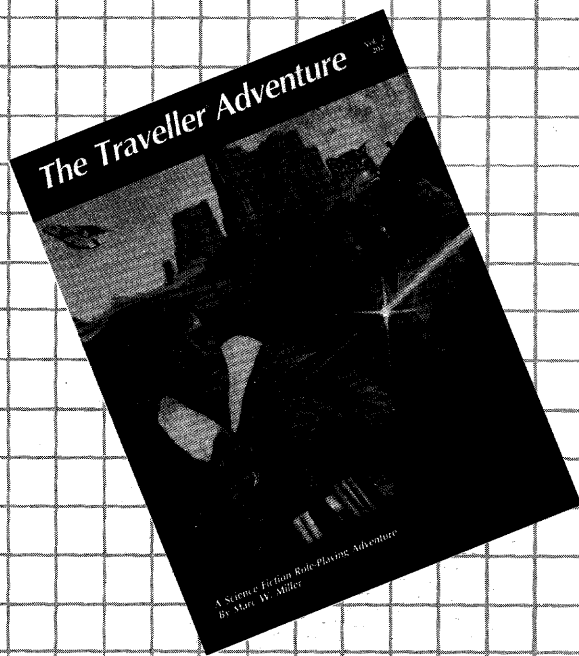
* * *

Shouldn't the initial penalty of -6 "to hit" on missile fire (because the archer is not initially used to shooting without having to account for gravity) be removed after it is suffered just once, to reflect the archer's sudden realization that all he has to do is aim at a target directly?

This good point was made, in one way or another, by several persons. The rule stated in the original article should still apply to all attacks made with thrown weapons; one will always have the penalty initially, and even after compensating for it will have to re-learn how to compensate each time the Astral Plane is re-entered. (Perhaps a few practice sessions at throwing things would be in order right after one enters astral space.) Slings are also governed by this rule.

A modification to the rule may be made for all types of bows and crossbows that permit direct missile fire. Immediately after entering the Astral Plane, a person who is familiar with archery (who has taken a bow or crossbow as a personal weapon of expertise) rolls 3d6; a result equal to or less than the character's intelligence score indicates that the character already realizes the weightlessness of the plane will change the path of arrows or bolts to a straight line; the first missile such a character fires will have a -2 "to hit" penalty, but the rest will be fired as normal.

Would-be archers who fail the roll vs. intelligence will automatically miss any target over 60' distant on the first attempt to hit it. However, with each subsequent missile fired, the archer or crossbowman may again attempt to roll intelligence or less on 3d6, and if successful will have a -2 "to hit" on the *next* missile fired, and then make all future shots at normal "to hit" odds. (Again, a little target practice at first couldn't hurt.) One character may forewarn another about the adjustments, so the



The Traveller Adventure

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second archer won't need to do an intelligence roll; the procedure of firing the first missile at a -2 "to hit," however, stays the same. Once this difference in missile fire is learned, an archer does not need to make any further intelligence rolls upon re-entering the Astral Plane, but will always shoot the first missile he fires on that plane at -2 (while "learning" the procedure first-hand over again).

* * *

Since any missile in astral space will follow a straight-line path without slowing down, shouldn't the maximum missile ranges be extended to infinity, or at least to "as far as the eye can see"?

It's true that missiles will have infinite range; they can (and perhaps do) travel "to infinity." But the probability of hitting a target — which is what missile firing is all about — at long ranges is extremely low; it approaches zero much sooner, and much more rapidly, than the missile approaches infinity.

The smallest fraction of error in aiming at a very distant target can produce a complete miss. Imagine having a rifle in outer space and being told to shoot at a 5-foot-diameter target one mile away. You can see that far, and a fired missile would certainly travel that far, but the slightest error in your aim means that you miss. Doubling the maximum missile ranges seemed like a fair way to extend missile fire without failing to account for the loss of accuracy. The chance of hitting anything (unless it is *really* big) at a distance greater than the double-distance long range (as set forth in the original article) should be considered very small — too small to be worth bothering about.

But . . . if some magic-user were to invent, perish the thought, "smart arrows" that track a target by its innate intelligence, or some *wizard eye*-like guidance system, well . . . let's let that possibility go for the time being.

* * *

Since all movement depends upon simply thinking about moving, couldn't a character dodge a blow by literally thinking himself out of the way?

Not really; the ability to dodge blows in this fashion is subsumed in the normal armor class adjustments involving dexterity. The higher dexterity one has, regardless of intelligence, the better one's nervous system is at responding to mental commands to move. (Think of dexterity as analogous to reaction time.) One astral character could "swoop down" at another character and strike as he flew past, but unless the target character is preoccupied, he or she will get a chance to strike back, too, at normal odds "to hit."

* * *

Why is overbearing not allowed, but grappling and pummeling are? Couldn't an attempt to overbear disorient and upset the defender, sending him rolling and tossing?

The sort of attack described in the question could be done just as well by grappling. Overbearing requires that there be a surface to fight on, and gravity that will work to the overbearer's advantage. Otherwise, attacks meant to overbear will work out (in non-gravity) just like grappling.

* * *

If movement on the Astral Plane depends only on intelligence, then it would seem that a magical sword or other weapon that had an innate intelligence would be able to move and fight just like a sword of dancing can. If this is so, then how could you determine the fighting ability of an intelligent weapon?

This question didn't occur to us during the production of the original astral article. It opens up many more questions than

just the one above — for instance, could an intelligent sword be made to push treasure along? Haul unconscious party members? Fight independently, either as a sword or by making a long run at something like a spear?

Fortunately, there is a good "game" answer to the above question that also makes some sense "realistically": The intelligence of a magic weapon is not a biological intelligence that is normally accustomed to acting while being able to move independently; in contrast, characters or creatures that can and do move independently on the Prime Material and other planes *are* accustomed to acting while moving on their own, even though movement ability is not a function of intelligence in their normal environment.

Thus, magical weapons have no effective movement on their own in astral space (except for *swords of dancing*, which function as per the DMG). Magic weapons are assumed to have no sensory awareness of their surroundings except by means of whatever powers they might possess (*detect traps*, *detect metals*, etc.) In a word, they are blind. If such a weapon is held by a character, it may be assumed that the weapon can obtain some limited awareness of its surroundings, through the wielder's own senses, but that is all. In the AD&D adventure provided with the Astral Plane article in DRAGON #67, Fedifensor itself might have escaped its predicament if it had been able to move on its own astrally.

Magical Alterations

If magic items from the Prime Material Plane are reduced in effectiveness when taken to the Astral Plane or one of the Outer Planes, would not items made upon an Outer Plane be reduced in effectiveness if taken to the Astral or Prime Material Plane?

Sure, although there should be a limit to the reduction in effectiveness. Prime Material magic items suffer a loss of one magical "plus" when taken to the Astral Plane, and two such steps when taken to any Outer Plane. The reverse should also be true of items coming from a particular Outer Plane. If a demon prince made a +5 weapon on Plane #423 of the Abyss, the weapon would still be a +5 weapon anywhere in the Abyss, but would be a +4 weapon on the Astral Plane and a +3 weapon on the Prime Material Plane. Some interesting adventures might be arranged around magic weapons which, on the Prime Material Plane, are quite weak, but which pick up additional and unexpected powers the closer they are taken to their home planes.

* * *

Wouldn't magic items that depend on energy from the Positive and Negative Material Planes be reduced in effectiveness if taken into astral space?

Yes, but most of these effects are assumed to be accounted for in the general magic-item alterations. A *sword of life stealing*, +2 would become a *sword of life stealing*, +1 astrally and a non-magical sword on any Outer Plane; it is assumed that such a sword has some kind of innate link anyway with the Negative Material Plane.

Part of the problem in answering this question is that it is not clear which weapons and items, if any, get their magical energy directly from the Positive and Negative Material Planes and which do not. The question can be dropped for the present without affecting the play of the game, however.

* * *

How long does it take to recover spells for casting astrally?

The spell caster, whether praying for a spell or reading from a spell book, will find that it takes the same amount of time to recover spells in the Astral Plane as it does normally (see p.39-40, DMG), but instead of sleeping the spell-caster must remain at rest, unmoving, for the stated length of time. As mentioned in the original article, spell casters may only attempt

to gain new spells once during any single astral journey; the peculiar magical properties of the plane make it impossible for normal spell casters to gain any new spells after that.

* * *

Couldn't clerics who worship a deity who lives on the Astral Plane be allowed to recover spells more than once?

To every rule (see the preceding question) there is always one exception, and this (ahem) is one such. Clerics — but not magic-users or illusionists — whose object of worship normally resides on the Astral Plane may repeatedly recover spells while astral, though the above-stated time limits still apply for each recovery period.

* * *

How do native astral races like the githyanki recover spells they cast?

The githyanki and other native astral races who cast spells can, because they have fully adapted to the astral environment, recover any spells they use as often as desired. Visitors from the Prime Material Plane will never be able to pick up this adaptation, a wish notwithstanding. Recovery times, as described above for magic-user and cleric characters, still apply.

Specific Spell Alterations

Below are listed certain spell alterations that are further clarified or corrected from the original presentation:

Cleric spells:

Commune, Divination, Spiritual Hammer — The Astral Plane is not considered "neutral territory" to the gods, as the Prime Material Plane is. Spells like *commune*, *divination*, and *spiritual*

hammer will not function astrally — unless the cleric's deity lives on the Astral Plane — because to succeed, they require direct intervention by the deity or a minion of the deity. The gods who inhabit the Astral Plane would take offense if such a thing were allowed to happen — so it does not happen.

Word of Recall — This spell will work on the Astral Plane — if the cleric's deity lives on that plane, and if the cleric using the spell has a stronghold on the Astral Plane as well. In such a case, the cleric may use *word of recall* to instantly move from any point on the Astral Plane to a place within the astral stronghold that has a solid "floor."

Druid spells:

Chariot of Sustarre — The *chariot* does not come from the Elemental Plane of Fire, and so can appear astrally.

Conjure Elemental — See comments under "General Topics" earlier in this article.

Magic-user spells:

Anti-Magic Shell — Magic-using creatures native to the Astral Plane may use this spell normally.

Conjure Elemental — See comments under "General Topics" earlier in this article.

Find Familiar, Monster Summoning — Note that these spells do not open an inter-planar gate, but simply attract creatures residing on or passing through the Astral Plane.

Teleport — Use of this spell, or a magic item which is similar in nature, is allowed if one is attempting to teleport *within* the Astral Plane to a solid surface, such as a matter island or a fortress.

Tenser's Floating Disk — The original article was in error about the usage of this spell and its after-effects; when the spell duration ends, anything the *disk* was carrying will follow a straight-line path at a constant velocity, moving at the same speed the now-expired *disk* was maintaining.



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"... clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I will kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage; I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will banty with thee in faction; I will o'er-run thee with policy; I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways; therefore, tremble and depart!"
Shakespeare — AS YOU LIKE IT

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The Deities & Demigods of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK

by E. Gary Gygax

ERYTHNUL

(The Many)

Lesser god

*Ugliness, Hate, Envy, Malice, Panic,
Slaughter*

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 18"

HIT POINTS: 320

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12 +10 (strength
bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

SIZE: M (7' tall)

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: Chaotic
evil

SYMBOL: Red blood drop

PLANE: Pandemonium

CLERIC/DRUID: 5th level cleric

FIGHTER: 15th level fighter

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: Nil

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: III

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

S:22 I:16 W:16

D:19 C:22 CH:-4



Erythnul, known as "The Many," is the deity of capricious malice, hate, envy, and panic. His followers include humans and humanoids as well, for Erythnul is said to greatly reward his faithful servants for their fickleness and wickedness. Erythnul stalks battlefields in order to strike fear and rout whenever possible.

This deity appears as a seven-foot-tall, brutal-looking male human. He is ruficose of complexion, hirsute, and muscular. Erythnul has mad, darting eyes of dull green color which are horrible to behold. He is typically clad in red fur garments and russet-dyed leather. He carries a huge stone-headed mace. The head of this weapon is pierced so that when Erythnul swings it, the mace gives off a shrieking whistle.

The mace is not a magical weapon *per se*, but any creature hearing its ghastly keening must save versus paralyzation or drop whatever he holds, turn, and run screaming from the area. The area of effect is a 10-foot radius, wisdom bonuses apply to saving throws, and creatures above 12 hit dice or 12th experience level are not affected. Panicked creatures will flee until exhaustion causes them to fall senseless. If they fail to make a roll with 3d6 which is equal to or less than their constitution score, they die of fatigue and shock. (Where constitution is unknown, there is a 1 in 4 chance of death.)

When Erythnul engages in combat, his visage mutates from segment to segment, flowing in form from human to gnoll to bugbear to ogre to troll. This

indicates his special quality of being able to generate servitors from his blood. If Erythnul is stabbed or cut in battle, the blood spilled will immediately generate the creatures listed below. In all cases, these magical creatures never check morale, and they will fight until slain.

1st wound: 5-20 1st level human fighters, with 10 hit points each, armored in red metal (AC 5) and wielding footmen's maces.

2nd wound: 4-16 gnolls, with 16 hit points each, clad in red-lacquered armor (AC 4) and wielding morning stars.

3rd wound: 3-12 bugbears, with 25 hit points each, adorned in plates of red enameled iron (AC 3) and wielding flails.

4th wound: 2-8 ogres, with 33 hit points each, wearing pelts and hides of red fur and hair (AC2) and wielding huge clubs (2-8 hit points of damage +6 points strength bonus).

5th wound: 1-4 trolls, with 48 hit points each, whose coppery skin indicates unusually high armor class (AC 1).

The above occurs only once in a given combat and never more than once per day.

In addition to normal cleric spells, Erythnul can cast a *fear* spell exactly as if he were a 12th level magic-user, except that the spell-like power issues from Erythnul's eyes. The spell can be cast



once per round. If it is used, he cannot otherwise attack, although the spell-like power can be interrupted. He is also able to take the form of a human, groll, bugbear, ogre, or troll at will, changing form in 1 segment. Erythnul otherwise has all of the powers typical for a lesser god.

Clerics of Erythnul dress in rust-colored garments. Their ceremonial robes are most often white spattered with blood. Masks include stylized visages for each of Erythnul's five aspects. Each cleric above 3rd level is also able to cast a *scare* spell just as if he or she were a magic-user. The spell is in addition to normal cleric spells.

Most places of worship of Erythnul are hidden. Towns and cities will usually have a small cult of his followers amongst

the denizens of the local thieves' quarter. Many gnolls, bugbears, ogres, and trolls worship this deity. Services include shrill reed instruments played in discordant tones, gongs, and drums. Major rites involve fire and a sacrifice.

INCABULOS

Major god

Evil, Plague, Sickness, Famine, Drought, Disasters, Nightmares

ARMOR CLASS: -9

MOVE: 15"/45"

HIT POINTS: 383

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +2 (strength bonus)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 95%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Evil*

SYMBOL: *Eye of possession*

PLANE: *Hades*

CLERIC/DRUID: *18th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *18th level illusionist*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *13th level thief*

MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *II*

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

S:18 I:20 W:20

D: 25 C: 21 CH: -3 (24 on Hades)

Incabulos is the deity of evil sendings — plagues, sickness, droughts, nightmares, and the like. His major delights are woe and wickedness. Thus, he is feared by even the princes of Hades and dukes of Hell.

Incabulos is so horrible-looking as to make anyone shudder, with his nightmarish visage, deformed body, and skeletal hands. Clad in robes of dead black lined with cloth of sickly orange hue and nauseating moss green, he roams the Astral Plane, Ethereal Plane, and Prime Material Plane, the latter during darkness only. Often he rides a huge nightmare, accompanied by six of the strongest night hags likewise mounted.

In addition to his other abilities and spell powers, Incabulos has a *permanent sleep* spell that takes one segment and which can be removed only by exorcism. He also has a *double strength sleep* spell that requires 2 segments to cast. Either spell is usable once a day.

His normal weapon is a *staff of wounding* (the reverse of *curing*) and *withering*, both of these functions affecting even demons, devils, vegetation, and so forth. The device has no fewer than 60 charges. Incabulos also employs a *sword of venom* (bastard sword) at times.

In time of need Incabulos will summon

aid by *gating* in 4 night hags or else 8 hoardlings. Either arrives at a rate of 1 per round starting on the round the *gate* is opened. Hoardlings willingly serve Incabulos. This summoning of aid can be done once per day for either sort, night hags or hoardlings. (*Editor's note: The hoardling is a new creature type to be described in Monster Manual II. It may be previewed for DRAGON™ readers in a later issue, before Monster Manual II is published.*)

Incabulos can be hit only by +4 or better weapons. He has all the attributes typical of greater deities. He regenerates 2 points of damage per round.

Those who worship and serve Incabulos are most secretive, fearing the wrath of those (even others of evil ilk) who detest what Incabulos stands for. Yet many do call upon this deity, and hidden temples exist in subterranean places and forsaken lands. His priesthood dresses in black, of course, with the *eye of possession* symbol in verdigrised bronze, repeated in dull orange on the robes of higher clerics.

Faithful clerics of 5th and higher level have the ability to cast *hypnotism* as if they were 3rd level illusionists. At 8th level they can cast a *sleep-like* spell by touching the (single) intended victim.

Services to honor Incabulos have weird humming and droning chants as background. Multiple evils are celebrated by the faithful, while flickering black candles dimly light the altar areas. All vessels are of old bronze, carnelian, or bloodstone.



NERULL

(The Reaper)

Major god

Death, *Darkness, Underworld*,
Covert activity

ARMOR CLASS: -6

MOVE: 15"/45"

HIT POINTS: 400

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (10'swath)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-30 (save vs.
death magic)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%

SIZE: M (7' tall)

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Any evil*

SYMBOL: *Skull and scythe*

PLANE: *Tarterus*

CLERIC/DRUID: 76th level cleric

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 16th level
magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 16th level assassin

MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/nil*

S:14 I:21 W:21

D:21 C:21 CH:-7

The dreaded Nerull is the Foe of all Good, Hater of Life, Bringer of Darkness, King of All Gloom, Reaper of Flesh. He is the deity of all those who seek greatest evil for their enjoyment and gain.

Nerull appears as a skeletal figure. His body is a dull, rusty-red color. His skull-like head is adorned with thick strands of blackish-green "hair." Nerull's eyes are of lambent green the color of verdigris, as are his teeth and taloned nails. With cowed cloak of rusty black and staff of red-veined sablewood, Nerull stalks the many planes — particularly the Prime Material when it is shrouded by night. This horror will cut down any living creature encountered, and send an undead monster howling off to its doom should it be of lawful bent.

The staff Nerull bears is a magical scythe which only he can employ. At his whim a huge blade of reddish-hued force appears at the tip of the shaft. Equal to a +5 weapon in hit probability, the "Life Cutter" causes instant death unless the victim struck saves versus death magic. Even so, the weapon still inflicts 5-30 points of damage, which cannot be magically cured save by a *heal* spell or similar high-level curative. Double damage is done to victims that draw energy from or are of the Positive Material Plane, magic resistance (if applicable) withstanding.

The scythe sweeps a path 10' long and 2' broad in an arc of about 180° before Nerull. All creatures therein, including

those in astral, ethereal, or even gaseous form, are subject to death or damage. Undead struck by the scythe blade have their negative energy drained unless they likewise save versus death magic. Damage is inflicted if a save is made. If the saving throw fails, the undead turns to powder and its force goes to Hades, Gehenna, Hell, etc., as appropriate. Nerull is also fond of carrying and using such evil magic items as a *necklace of strangulation*, *bag of devouring*, *rug of smothering*, etc. He employs them as would an assassin, silently, from behind.

In addition to the powers normal to a deity of major status, Nerull has the ability to *summon* 3 demodands of greatest strength. He will do so at any time their aid or services are perceived as useful to him. The *summons* takes but 1 segment, and the demodands will appear within 1-8 segments thereafter. The demodands

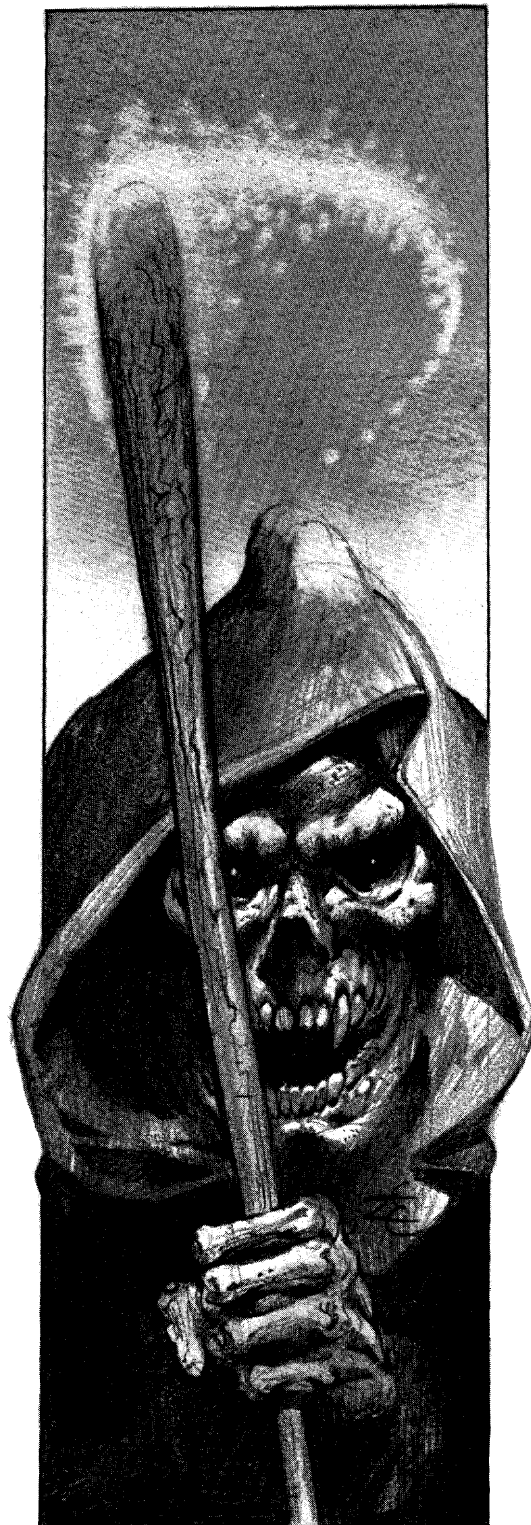
Many humans of evil nature pay homage to Nerull. . . . The litany is ghastly, being of death and suffering.

will instantly obey Nerull, or attack obvious foes, for although they hate Nerull, their fear of him outweighs all other considerations. (*Editor's note: The demodand is a new creature type that will be described in Monster Manual II. It may be previewed for DRAGON readers in a later issue prior to the release of that volume.*)

Nerull is also able to cast an *ebony tendrils* spell. This magic creates a 10' diameter clump of blackness within 2" of Nerull. From this shoot forth 4 tendrils which elongate 10' per round. Each covers a quadrant and will grasp any creature within range. Touch causes death unless a saving throw versus spells is successful. Magic resistance must fail first, of course, if applicable. Each surviving victim will still be grasped and entwined by a tendril. From 3-18 points of corrosive damage will be inflicted each round until the tendril is destroyed by *holy water*, a *bless* spell, or *dispel evil*. The *ebony tendrils* spell lasts 1 turn. Nerull is able to employ it once per day.

Nerull can travel any of the Lower Outer Planes, the Astral and Ethereal Planes, and the Elemental and Prime Material Planes as well. However, 90% of the time he does not venture from Tarterus save to wreak havoc on the Prime Material Plane. Nerull flies merely by so desiring, so he not only tends to travel alone but seldom uses any form of steed.

All of his senses, including infravision and ultravision, are of double human (or standard) norm, so Nerull cannot be



surprised except by some extraordinary means. Magical darkness or various clouds that obstruct vision do not do so with regard to Nerull. He can be struck only by +5 or better magic weapons.

Many humans of evil nature, and some humanoids as well, pay homage to Nerull. Assassins and thieves often regard this deity as a patron. In wicked lands, temples and cathedrals of Nerull are openly operated. In other places the rites of Nerull are conducted in subterranean shrines and sacred vaults. His clerics dress in rust-red or blackish-rust

garments, carry staves, and somewhere bear the unholy skull and scythe symbol. Clerics of 1st through 4th level are trained to use sickles as weapons (equal to a dagger in damage). Clerics of 5th and higher levels can employ scythe-like pole arms (treat as a hook-fauchard). All of Nerull's clerics are trained so that they can be surprised only one-half as frequently as other persons (roll d12; 1 or 2 equals surprise).

The worship of Nerull is done in full darkness. The litany is ghastly, being of death and suffering. Human sacrifice is common. Altars are of rusty-colored stone. Service pieces are usually of copper and malachite:

RALISHAZ

(The Unlooked For)

Lesser god

Chance, Randomness, Bad Luck, Misfortune, Madness

ARMOR CLASS: 0 to -6 (check each appearance)

MOVE: 15"-30" (check each appearance)

HIT POINTS: 140 + 5-50 (check each appearance)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1-4 (varies each round)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-20 +2 (strength bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 71%-90% (check each time)

SIZE: M (5'+ tall)

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic (evil)

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: Any, but usually chaotic

SYMBOL: Three bone sticks

PLANE: Limbo

CLERIC/DRUID: 18th level cleric

FIGHTER: Nil

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 9th level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: //

Attack/Defense Modes: All/a//

S: 18 I: 20 W: 20

D: 19 C:20 CH: 8 (-1)

Ralishaz is the deity of chance, ill luck, and misfortune. He is looked to as the one who causes unforeseen events which bring woe more often than weal. He is also the deity of chance and randomness and so is regarded as the patron of gamblers and those who take unusual risks (although his intercession is unlooked for).

Ralishaz most often appears on the Prime Material Plane as an ancient and oddly dressed mendicant — sometimes

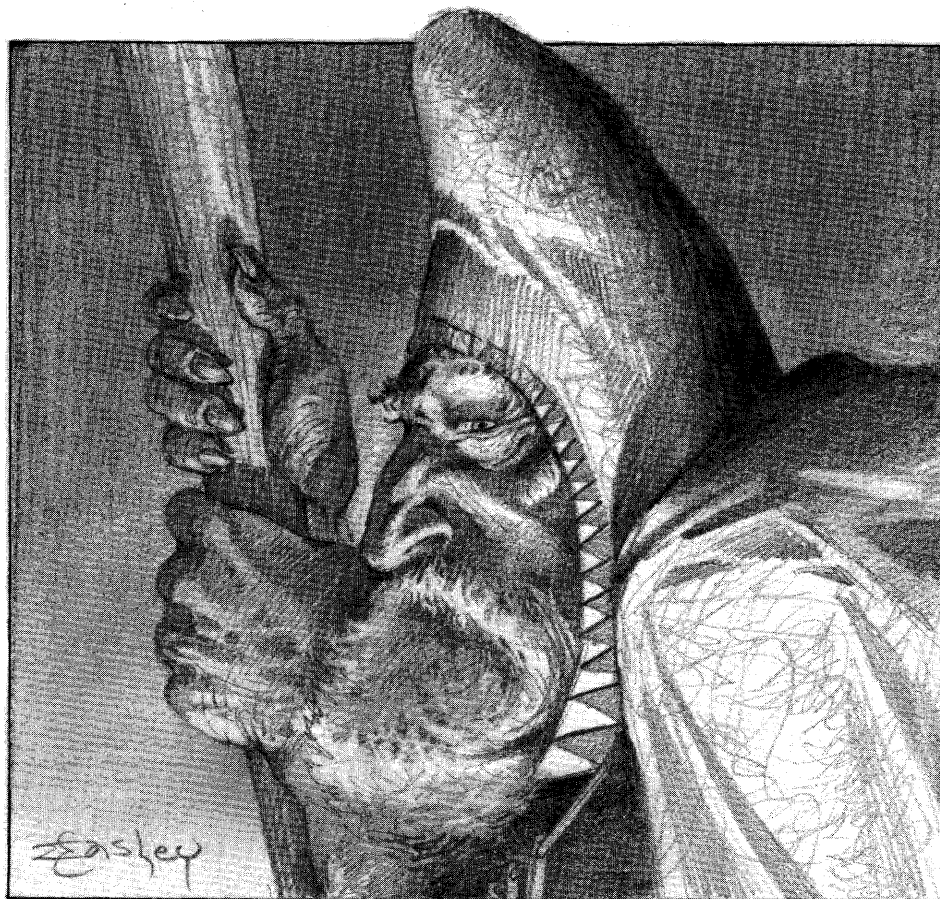
male, sometimes female. Ralishaz will beg or gamble in this guise. At other times he will appear as a jester or idiot. In his (or her) true form, Ralishaz is quite awful to behold, for at one moment the face and body of the deity are handsome, the next wrinkled and ugly — first that of a scabby beggar, then that of a beautiful maid. During all these changes, an aura of unease pervades, for the randomness of Ralishaz is most disturbing to all.

The only weapon Ralishaz ever uses is of wood — sometimes a club, other times a staff; both are actually the same item. The weapon is the equivalent of a +3 weapon, but it does 1-20 points of damage when it hits.

In addition to the powers normal to an 18th level cleric and 9th level illusionist,

necessary varies from day to day, by chance, from a +1 weapon to a +4 weapon (roll d4). Also, Ralishaz can sometimes reverse the effects of attacks. There is a 1 in 20 chance that an attack affecting the deity will actually affect the attacker, and there is a 1 in 20 chance that both Ralishaz and the attacker will be affected equally. He otherwise has the powers typical of a lesser god.

*Clerics of Ralishaz . . .
never seem to suffer
misfortune or ill luck —
unless it is very, very
bad indeed.*



Ralishaz has the following powers, no saving throw applicable (but magic resistance withstanding):

Gaze: acts as a sleep spell for 1-20 rounds (1 creature/round, 10' range)

Touch: ages subject 1-100 months (1/day)

Curse: variable effect (1 creature, 1/day):

1. Always lose games of chance.
2. Miss next luck opportunity (save or similar chance).
3. Two abilities of unequal rating change places with each other.
4. Always surprised during the next (1-20) encounters.

Ralishaz can be hit only by magic weapons. The "plus" value of weapon

Few persons formally worship Ralishaz, although there are a handful of small shrines and temples in large cities and out-of-the-way places. Clerics of Ralishaz wear varicolored robes of differing materials. At 3rd-6th level (roll d4 for each individual), clerics of this deity gain the ability to *sleep* by gaze, 1 use per day, saving throw applicable. It is noteworthy that these clerics never seem to suffer misfortune or ill luck — unless it is very, very bad indeed. The ceremonies of worship of Ralishaz involve random notes on musical instruments, babbling paeans, the frequent casting of augury devices, and wildly varying conditions of light and darkness, noise and quiet, heat and chill.

WASTRI

(The Hopping Prophet)

Demi-god

Bigotry, Self-Deception, Amphibians

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 18" (3" hop)

HIT POINTS: 129

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +2 (strength bonus) or 2-12/2-12 (open hand)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+1 or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral (evil)*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral-lawful evil*

SYMBOL: *Gray toad*

PLANE: *Prime Material*

CLERIC/DRUID: *15th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *Nil*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *7th level assassin*

MONK/BARD: *8th level monk*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/nil*

S: 18 I: 10 W:20 D: 22

C: 19 CH:2 (20 as respects amphibians)

Wastri, the Hopping Prophet, Hammer of Demi-humans, dwells on the Prime Material Plane (now in the region of the Vast Swamp). It is he who preaches the ultimate superiority of humankind. While humanoids can serve, demi-humans are fit only to be slain — especially dwarves, gnomes, and halflings. These, with the aid of his gray-clad "Servants," he hunts with his toad packs and exterminates whenever possible.

Wastri has somehow mutated to become both less and more than human. He is unmistakable due to his batrachian features and odd gait. Yet he can move quickly enough, and can hop for considerable distance with ease and accuracy. He wears no armor, relying on his speed and agility. Wastri dresses in parti-colored clothing of gray and dull yellow. Wastri is renowned for his great glaive-guisarme, a pole arm of +4 magical property with which he harries his prey, especially loving to catch small demi-

Wastri can cast a warts enchantment which will cover the victim with huge, knobby warts unless a save versus magic is made.

humans on its long end spike. (Damage is 2-8 +4 +2 vs. S/M, 2-12 +4 +2 vs. L.)

In addition to his normal attacks and cleric spells, Wastri can utter a *croak* which will *confuse* (as a *confusion* spell) all creatures within a 4" radius who hear the sound unless a save versus magic is made. Wastri can in 1 segment cast a *warts* enchantment which will cover the victim with huge, knobby warts unless a save versus magic is made. The *warts* make it difficult to grasp any weapon (50%/round probability of dropping), and the charisma of an affected victim drops to 3. The affected individual must also save versus poison or fall into a dejected state similar to paralysis for 2-12 rounds. Finally, Wastri can in 1 round cast a *dampness* spell over an area of a square mile. The dweomer reduces archery range by one-half, limits visibility to 6", extinguishes normal fires in 1 round, and reduces the effects of magical fires by one-half. The foggy *dampness* spell lasts for 5-60 rounds. Each spell-like power — *croak*, *warts*, *dampness* — can be used once per day. He otherwise has powers typical of a demi-god.

Wastri can speak with any amphibians, commanding them as he wishes. He is able to *summon* any or all of the following creatures, 1 group per turn, once each per week: 10-40 bullywugs, 5-20 giant toads, 2-8 poisonous toads, and 1-4 ice toads.

The creatures will appear 1 round after summoning. Each individual will be of largest size, have +1 hit probability and +1 damage.

Under usual circumstances Wastri is always accompanied by his "Immaculate Image" (a cleric/monk of 12th/6th level who hops as he does), three "Greater Servants" (clerics of 9th to 12th level), and a pair of huge toads (AC 5; HD 5; HP 40; D 4-16).

At the Sacred Polystery, the Hopping Prophet has scores of "Hopefuls" — those attempting to become his clerics. There are also dozens of "Lesser Servants" — clerics of 1st through 4th level. Hopefuls are dun clad. Lesser Servants are robed in gray. All help to breed and maintain superior toads. It is rumored that some of the monsters they breed appear remarkably human, just as some of Wastri's followers appear toad-like. Clerics of Wastri above 4th level are able to use a *jump* spell (*cf.* the magic-user spell) once per day, at a level of efficacy equal to that of a magic-user of the same level. All these clerics can speak with amphibians as well.

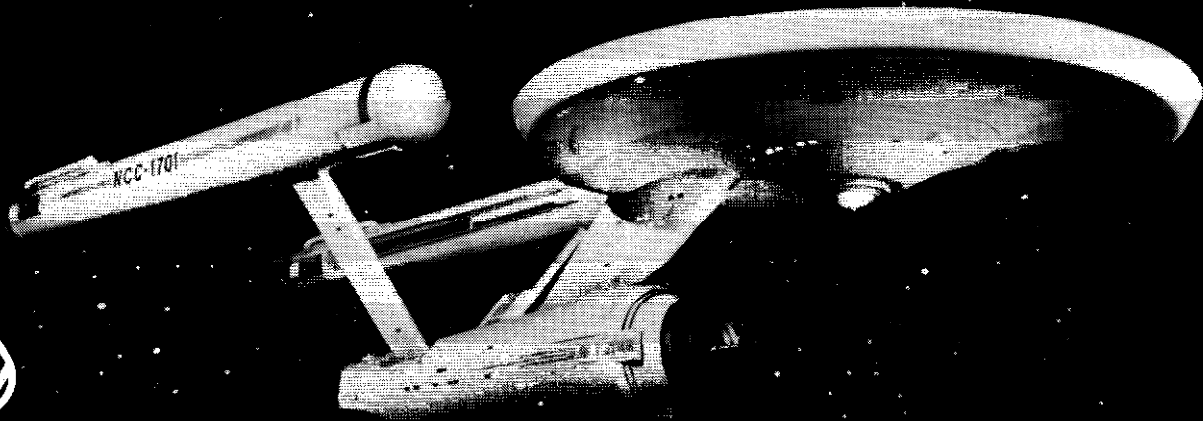
Worship of Wastri is not common, although it has supposedly spread to the Hool Marshes and possibly elsewhere. Ceremonies honoring Wastri involve sacrifices, strange musical instruments, and croaking chants. All places of worship are dim, dark, and chilly. The credo of human superiority and exaction of rights and duties are always stressed. ☘



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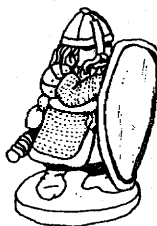
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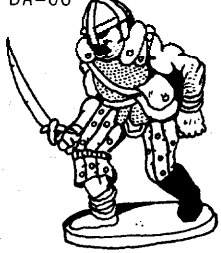
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FANTASY WORLDS FESTIVAL, March 18-20 — A SF/fantasy convention at the Oakland Airport Hyatt Hotel. Marion Zimmer Bradley will be among the guests. For more information, send SASE to Fantasy Worlds Festival, Box 72, Berkeley CA 94701.

NEO-CON II, March 18-20 — A full schedule of gaming events is on tap for this convention, to be held on the campus of the University of Akron. For details, write to Northeast Ohio Gamers Society, P.O. Box 4045, Akron OH 44321.

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY CONVENTION XII, March 19 — To be held at the Century Center, South Bend, Ind. Admission is \$5.25 at the door. Contact: Emperor's Birthday Con XII, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart IN 46516.

ALASCON IV, March 19-20 — At the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Admission \$5 per day, \$8 for the weekend. For more information: Ken Mayer, P.O. Box 82374, College AK 99708, phone (907)474-7685, room 311.

AGGIECON XIV, March 24-27 — To be held at the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University. Memberships are

priced at \$7.50 until March 1, \$10 thereafter. Contact: Aggie-Con XIV, P.O. Drawer J-I, College Station TX 77844.

FANTASYLAIR '83, March 25-27 — To be held at Tonkawa H. S. in Tonkawa, Okla. Contact: Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers, Box 241, Ponca City OK 74602; (405)762-0349 or (405)765-2382.

STELLARCON 8, March 25-27 — A SF convention to be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For details, write to Mike Brown, SF³, Box 4, E.U.C., U.N.C.-G., Greensboro NC 27412.

NOVA 8, March 26-27 — Sponsored by the Order of Leibowitz at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., this gathering is described as "the longest-running free convention in the country." A wide range of gaming activities, including "traditional" games, is planned. More information is available from Roberta Kennedy, publicity chairperson, c/o The Order of Leibowitz, Oakland University, Rochester MI 48063.

PINE-CON, April 1-3 — A game convention scheduled for the University of Maine at Orono. For details, write to Pine-Con, c/o Timothy Wright, 134 Gannet Hall, University of Maine, Orono ME 04469.

CAPCON '83, April 8-10 — A gathering for gamers to be held on the campus of Ohio State University in Columbus. Admission is free on Friday night, and \$1 per day on Saturday and Sunday. For more information, contact Paul T. Riegel, 5226 Heritage Lane, Hilliard OH 43026, phone (614)869-4450.

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CONTRETEMPS 2, April 22-24 — Gordon R. Dickson and Joe Haldeman are among the personalities scheduled to appear at this SF convention, scheduled for the New Tower Inn, 78th & Dodge St., Omaha, Neb. For more information, send SASE to Contretemps, P.O. 12422, Omaha NE 68112.

COLUMBIA WIZARDCON, April 23 — This gaming event will be held at Columbia University in New York City. Attendees can pre-register by writing before April 9 to Brad Lewis, 902 Fumald Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

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Niagara Gamers' Association, 223 St. Paul St., St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6V9, or call Keith Siren at (416)682-1438.

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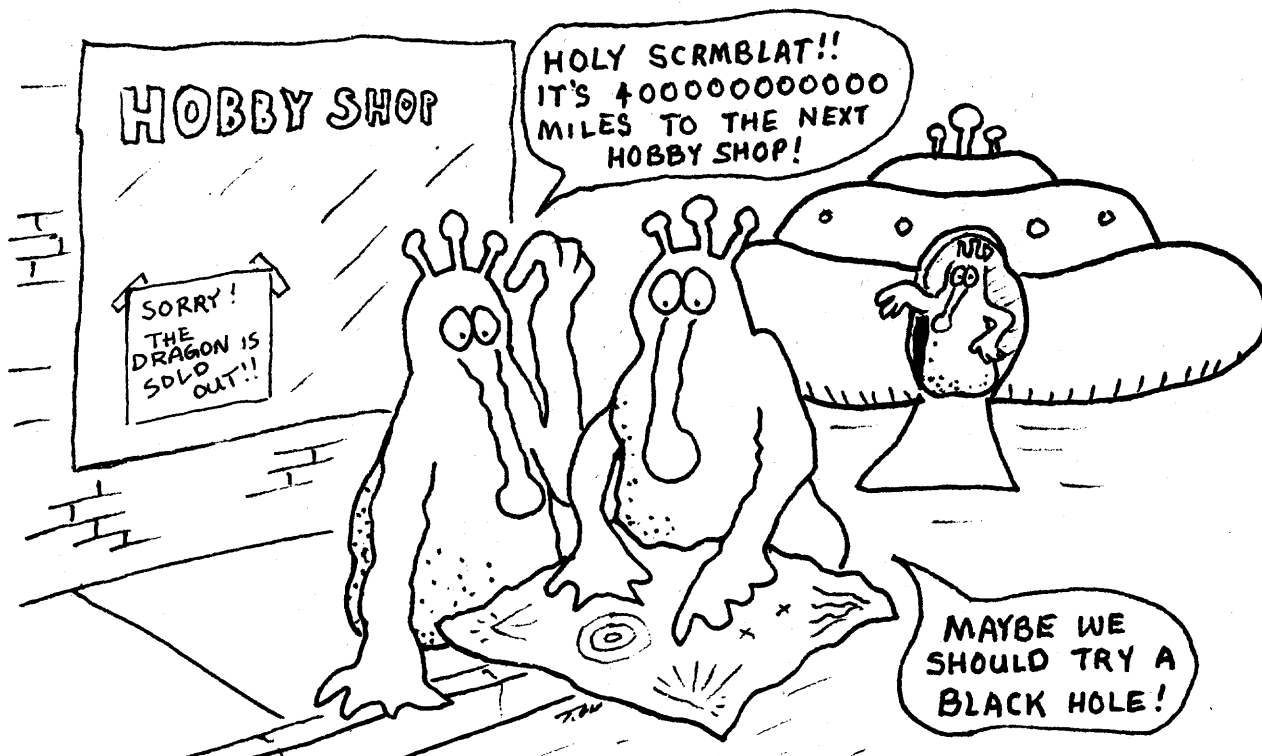
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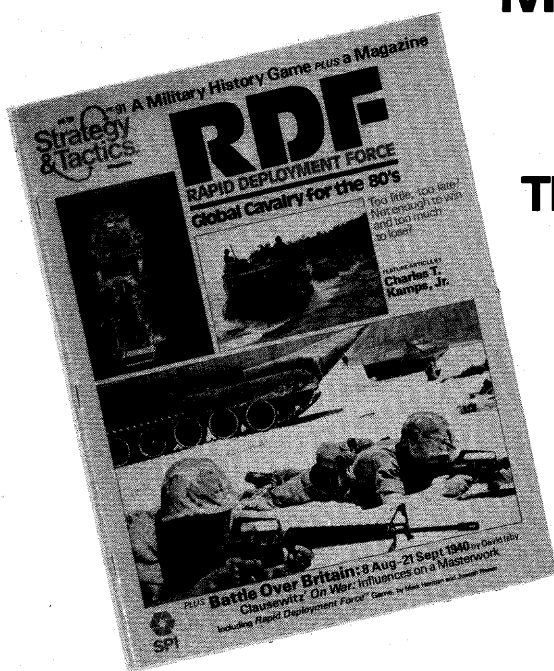
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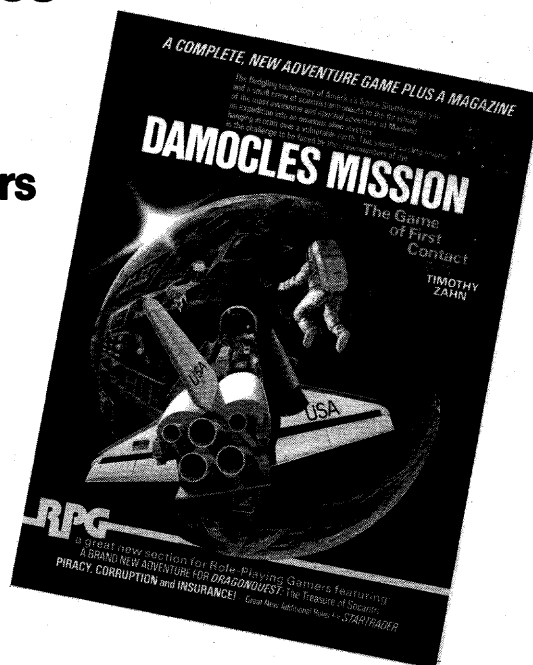
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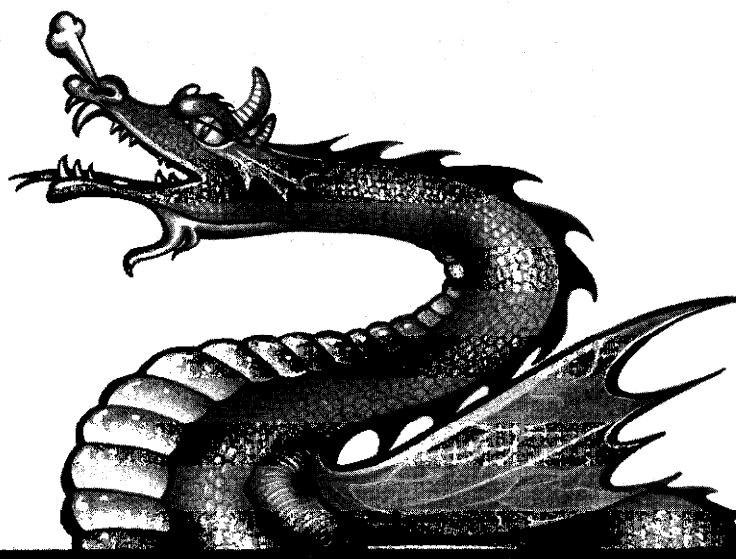
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Swordbearer makes lots of sense

Reviewed by Ken Ralston

The overall effect of reading the rules to *SWORDBEARER* is like the feeling you get when you tug vigorously on a door handle, only to have someone come along and point to the word "Push" on the door. You feel a little silly at discovering how simple and sensible the solution to your problem really was.

There are good things to be said for almost all of the different FRP game systems in print today, but only for Heritage USA's *Swordbearer* would I choose the words "intelligent, logical, and full of sensible advice." The designers, Arnold Hendrick and Dennis Sustare, are obviously experienced and sensitive to the limitations of current systems; they have addressed many of those limitations with some new and more satisfying solutions. By their handling of magic, character development, and game mechanics, and their common-sense guides to developing superior campaigns and gamemasters, they have produced a thought-provoking and imagination-stirring fantasy role-playing system.

In some ways *Swordbearer* resembles *Chivalry and Sorcery* in its overall flavor;

though far less encumbered with detail and not as slow-moving as C&S, it seems to have a convincingly medieval feel to it. *Swordbearer*, like C&S, is a sophisticated system — sophisticated not in the sense of "complex" (though it is not a particularly simple system), but in the sense of "experienced, polished, and knowledgeable." Like all rule systems it is dry reading, but the intelligent, common-sense treatment of fantasy role-playing is particularly appealing when contrasted with other systems.

The style is generally sober, unlike *Tunnels and Trolls* or *RuneQuest*. Sometimes the "gamespeak" is almost incomprehensible in its search for concise but unambiguous specificity, and occasionally the exposition suffers from a lack of the illustrating example that might make sense of all the rules talk — but such is true of most FRP systems. Where the writing is best is where the writer is speaking from experience about how to create and maintain a campaign or about how to be a better gamemaster. Where the writing is most interesting is where a different and compelling solution is given to an old problem of FRP rules design.

One unusual feature of *Swordbearer* is

that the system does not use money. "Instead," as the rules put it, "each character has a social status level, and a character is assumed to have funds and powers appropriate to that status." As the authors observe, this is far closer to the medieval model than dollars-and-cents American capitalism, and anyone who has seen characters waltzing around with 300,000 gold pieces will particularly appreciate the aptness of this invention.

This is essentially a minor detail, however. The major virtues of the rules include a self-consistent magic system with an appealing atmosphere of ritual and drama, an unusually detailed character generation system, and the finest advice, common sense, and experienced wisdom on gamesmastering ever collected under one cover.

From the outset, new gamers are told that it will be easier to begin without the magic systems, adding magic as the campaign develops — a simple and remarkably sensible idea for all FRP novices. The magic itself is divided into two disciplines: elemental magic, the simpler and less powerful of the two, and spirit magic, somewhat more imposing.

The use of elemental magic involves

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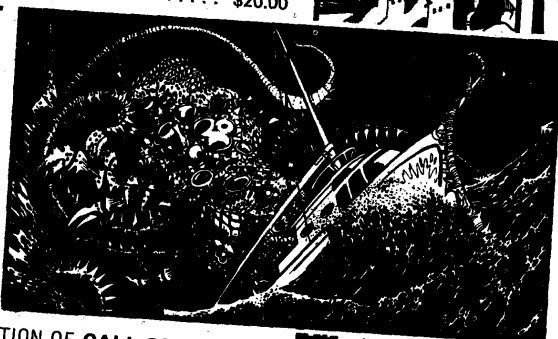
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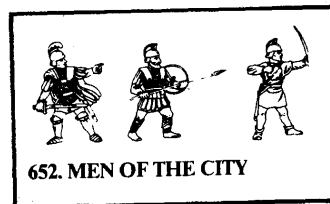
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recognizing and harnessing the power of "elemental nodes" which represent the pure essence of each of the seven elements: fire, metal, crystal, water, wood, wind, and light/darkness. The procedure for using the nodes to power spells is simple in concept, but rather more involved in practice. Nodes may also be used to enchant items by an extension of their more common use in spell casting. The elemental spell list is fairly limited in power and variety, and does not seem to be open-ended.

The rules do not allow for specific character classes, but characters are generally specialized in one or two spheres of knowledge or technology. A character who specializes in elemental magic alone may be interesting, but would not be a major threat to anyone until he has quite a bit of experience and a goodly supply of elemental nodes to his credit. On the other hand, someone who doesn't rely solely on the use of magic may enhance his other specialties with a little magic skill and have a versatile and well-prepared character.

The use of spirit magic depends on "spirit nodes," which can only be found in living creatures. There are two kinds of spirit nodes: "live" (found in live creatures) and "dead" (those from once-living creatures, which can be captured at the instant of the creature's death). A mage can even use his own spirit nodes

to employ spirit magic, if he is willing to risk exhausting or destroying them — a rather serious measure, best saved for an extreme circumstance. The four "humors" of spirit nodes — vitriolic, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholy — correspond to the four subdivisions of spirit magic. This realm of magic contains more exotic spells than the elemental magics — werecreature, poltergeists, charm, *vampire*, *lich*, and other such powerful enchantments.

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view, is consistent and sensible. There is a feeling of elemental and spiritual energies at work, along with a satisfyingly medieval yet fantastic air of arcane lore. It feels right for magic users to speak of "chaining elemental nodes through a sequence of dominance" to power a spell. It would be very easy to get into the role of a minor wizard in this system — there's much more involved in spell casting than "wave, wave . . . boom!"

In the excellent Book VI section, "Gamesmaster's Guide," the designers have specifically addressed practical problems encountered by most experienced gamesmasters. There is remarkable insight into the common problems

of gamesmastering; lucid analysis of many gamesmastering skills that most good GMs must develop unconsciously or by trial and error (if at all); and simple suggestions that address such complex problems as the dramatic structure of scenario design.

For example, the treatment of "Maps and Travel" from Book VI will warm the heart of any GM who has ever tried to run a wilderness campaign. Guidelines for creating "regional" and "locale" maps are given, with a comprehensive and uniform sense of scale. A very detailed terrain-classification system suggests how to note relevant variations in topography on maps. For instance, this

extract from the *Swordbearer* rules' treatment of watercourses:

Major (ss) streams are swift-running, and have cut a bed into the land that leads to soft sides, rocks in the streambed, etc. Although water is rarely up to hip deep, the banks contribute to the crossing problems. Minor(s) streams are even shallower, and the streambed is easy to cross, although care with horses or vehicles may be required. Streams are not navigable in any sense.

In the terrain-classification system, vegetation is graded in nine levels from flat plains of sand, snow, or salt up to the density of true jungle. A chart is provided to quickly give travel rates in hours per league when crossing a particular type of terrain with a specific vegetation class. The travel rate is given for cross-country, trail, unimproved or improved road conditions, and whether by foot or by horse; also, visibility in leagues is given. For example, in elevation class B, major mountains, above the tree line (vegetation class 3), visibility would be 2 leagues, and cross-country travel on foot would be at the rate of 5 hours per league; on horseback on a trail in the same conditions, the rate would be 3% hours per league. If the major mountains were densely forested (vegetation class 7), the visibility would be 0 leagues, and cross country travel on foot would be at

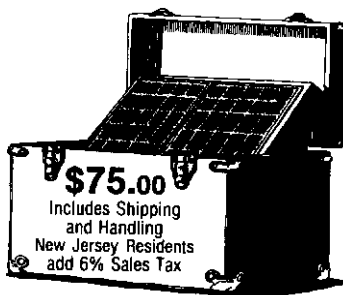


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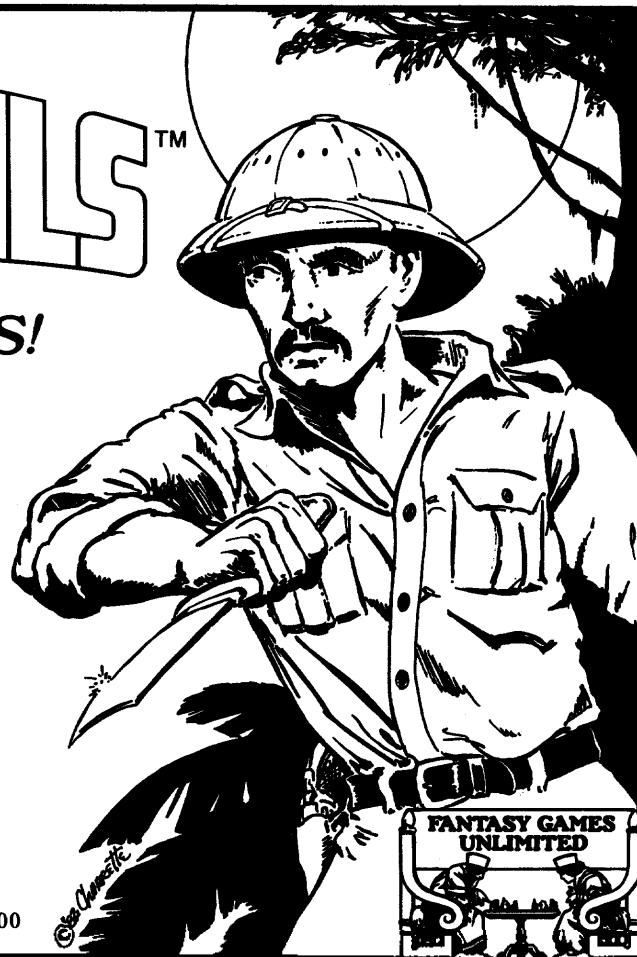
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the rate of 7½ hours per league, while on horseback on a trail the rate would be 4¾ hours per league.

Book I of the rules contains the character generation system — fairly straightforward, yet handling character abilities, skills, outfitting, social status, and background in a very satisfactory way. Book II covers combat in a detailed system that is carefully structured with a war-gaming flavor; it offers a number of action options, tactical maneuvering, and is a fairly serious attempt to capture the atmosphere of melee combat.

Book III and IV, describing elemental magic and spirit magic, and Book VI, the gamesmaster's guide, have already been discussed. Book V is the "Racial Index," with a nice selection of both familiar and unique creatures. The text describing each creature contains useful hints about the nature and culture of the intelligent races, and good notes on animal behavior and combat accompany a nice selection of mundane beasts for wilderness encounters.

Swordbearer is well designed, inexpensive, and in many ways an improvement over existing systems. Now, the difficult question: will anyone *play* it?

It is hard to imagine how anyone could break the stranglehold that the AD&D™ game and *RuneQuest* have on the FRP rules market. New FRP game systems come out, enjoy a brief place in the sun,

then virtually disappear, occasionally leaving a small coterie of dedicated fans to maintain the counterculture. The key to *Swordbearer's* success will only in part be determined by its quality; the major ingredients of success are aggressive marketing and superior product support. Heritage must do everything it can to get the rules into the hands of novice and veteran gamers; the box design is a poor step in that direction, but the price — a mere \$10 — is attractive.

Scenarios and supplements of superior quality must be made immediately available; a dramatic and well-developed module illustrating how to create and organize a scenario is a crucial step in

establishing *Swordbearer* as a real candidate to supplant a gamer's current system, or to be a beginner's first system. *Swordbearer's* sophistication may work against it, ironically enough. There are many more simple FRP game systems on the market, and there will be many who prefer a more simple system.

Whether or not you adopt *Swordbearer* rules for your campaign, however, you will find it a worthwhile buy and interesting reading. It is a quality product — a complete FRP system with many original and intelligent ideas. If it receives adequate product support, it may rise up through the ranks of aspiring competitors and join the big boys of FRP. ✕



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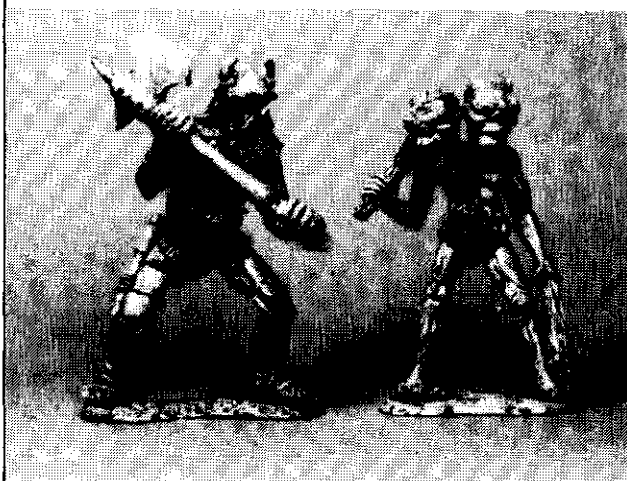
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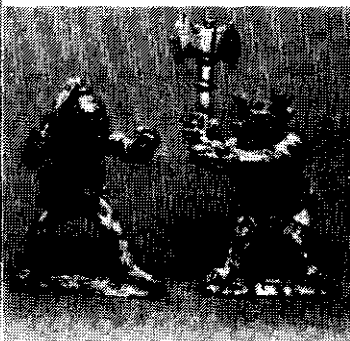
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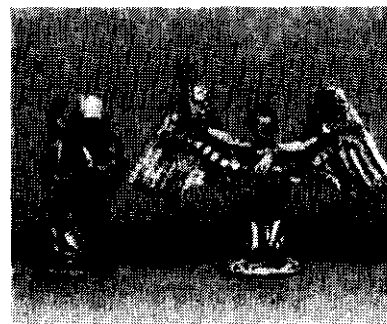


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Dunzhin cures terminal boredom

Reviewed by John Warren

Despite many attempts, fantasy conflict gaming has not lent itself well to computerization. Limited options, boring graphics, and rigid formats have quickly turned off many FRP enthusiasts who wandered into electronic dungeons.

Med Systems Software's *DUNZHIN* goes a long way toward accurately translating the fantasy role-playing experience into computer gaming. Originally

written in BASIC by Randall Don Masteller and translated into assembly language for the TRS-80 by William Denman, the game is enough to keep an adventurer busy on those evenings when your regular (human) Dungeon Master feels more like playing poker.


A basic flaw of earlier computer-adventure games was a fixed format dungeon; once the place was explored, many players just lost interest. To get around this problem, the *Dunzhin* program

creates a new dungeon for each adventure. There are facilities for saving individual dungeons on disk or tape, in the event that a player is not energetic enough to finish in a single sitting.

Each individualized dungeon is generated from a storehouse of 140 floor-plan components, each 15 rooms large (including inversions and mirror images), and may be from four to seven levels deep. Computation shows that almost four million different floor plans can be created by use of this system — effectively an endless variety of environments.

An unfortunate limitation of the game is that there is only one role available — fighter. Unlike most non-computer FRP games, *Dunzhin* starts everyone equal with a prepackaged persona that is duck soup for the beasts until the player develops a bit of skill. As play continues, the character gets faster, stronger and — maybe — a little smarter. Fortunately, the game has a provision to save several (developed) characters, so that players don't have to start every game as a poorly armed and armored peasant.

Weaponry is similarly limited, to only a sword and a magic wand. The sword is standard hero issue, and the wand has



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an annoying propensity for running out of power just when it's needed most. Fortunately, within the dungeon are places where it can be recharged.

The display makes the most of the limited graphics capability of the TRS-80. Two lines at the bottom of the screen are set aside for messages from the program and commands to it. Since some of the messages are rather lengthy, the programmers have given players some control over the display. If the player does nothing, the display shows the first two lines of the message, waits about two seconds and then shows the next two. Slow readers can freeze the message by holding down the clear key. Those more interested in clobbering monsters and getting rich than reading status messages can tap the key to move the message along double-time.

At the beginning of the game and when a player enters each new level, most of the screen is blank. Only when the character approaches a wall does it become visible. Evidently, *Dunzhin*'s torches are markedly inferior to those used in an AD&D™ or D&D® game, since a player must be within 10 feet of a wall to see it. However, once a section of a wall has appeared, it will remain on the screen for as long as the character is on that level. If a character returns to a level that has been visited before, the explored passages are immediately displayed.

The character's position is marked by the letter Y; monsters are indicated by an X. Players must consult the information lines at the bottom of the screen to determine what sort of monster has appeared. This information is relatively important, since different strategies work with various opponents. The only exception to the "Y = me, X = them" format is a somewhat less than subtle thief who keeps trying to steal the character's treasure pouch and is displayed as a Y.

The character is controlled by short commands typed in from the keyboard. One of the drawbacks of all computer games is that the player is at the mercy of the program as to when and what kind of

input is allowed. While a D&D player can suddenly interrupt the Dungeon Master's commentary and yell, "I fire my crossbow down the tunnel," no such freedom is allowed his electronic counterpart. If the machine isn't listening or if it doesn't understand, nothing happens.

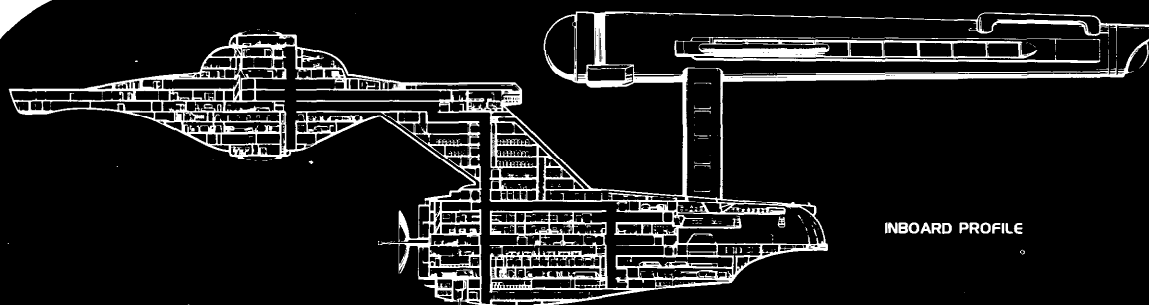
In this area, *Dunzhin* is both better and worse than some of its contemporaries. Where some games use one-letter commands that can be picked up quickly, almost all of *Dunzhin*'s commands require that the carriage return be pressed after the command is typed. While this does slow down play, the advantage is that the command structure can be complex and still easy to learn. For example,

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in response to a hostile encounter, the player can elect to "RUN": "HIDE", "FIGHT", "SUBDUE", or "BRIBE". If combat is chosen (or forced on the character by the failure of a less aggressive option), there are three modes of attack: normal combat; a wild and powerful, but unaimed swing; and a careful, aimed attack. Each of these attack modes can be directed against any of eight portions of the opponent's body.

Combat resolution is determined by the computer matching the strength of the attack (a random number based on character strength) against both the defense points of the armor in the area of the opponent's body which is attacked and the defense points of the area itself.

Dunzhin's status display shows how much damage has been done by the attacking monsters and the character's overall condition. At any time except during combat, the player can get a display giving the character's present characteristics. Checking this chart regularly is quite important, since heavy combat tends to erode the protection of armor, and an unwary player could find himself trying to continue a fight in the electronic equivalent of long johns.

The "HELP" command is useful, displaying all the available commands. Sadly, the command is not legal when combat is joined—a serious oversight, since this is when it is most needed.

As well as assorted monsters and human baddies, the character is faced with falling nets, trip wires, moving walls and even slippery floors. When these inanimate dangers are encountered, a special symbol flashes at the character's location and a warning message appears at the bottom of the screen. This is the only point in the game where a player's reflexes count. The player must press a key (any key) before a set time elapses. Failure to beat the clock will result in from one to five points of damage.

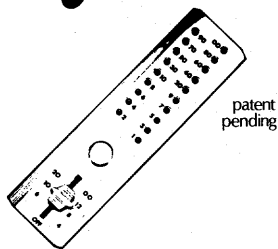
If the dangers are many, so are the rewards. While the primary goal is the recovery of a treasure hidden on the deepest level and guarded by a particularly effective team of monsters, there is enough gold and jewels scattered around in other places to "enrich" a character who doesn't make it that far.

Experience points are awarded based on the disparity between the character's and monster's characteristics. Thus, when a weak character overcomes a powerful monster, the character gets more points than when the same type of monster is defeated by a more powerful character. This leads to a rather rapid rise through the ranks for new and successful characters, with promotions coming few and far between as the character becomes more powerful.

Dunzhin is the first in a series of fantasy war games produced by Med Systems Software under the overall title of *Warrior of Ras*. All the games in the series permit characters created in one game to be loaded into another, and feature different environments for combat. *Kaiv* is set in a giant cave, while *The Wylde* has an outdoor setting. Both of these games have more extensive weapons and magic than *Dunzhin*.

Dunzhin and its fellows are available on disk or tape for the TRS-80 Model I or II. Both the tape and disk versions require 48K of RAM. As with most Med games, the disk version comes with its own operating system that prevents copying; however, for a small service charge, the company will replace any disk that becomes unplayable. ✕

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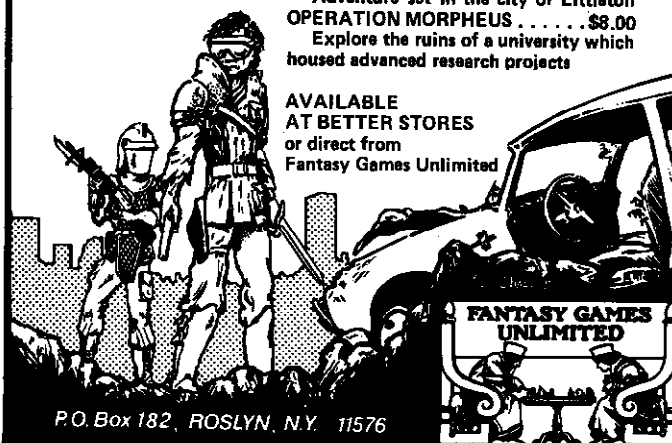
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THE WORD COMES FROM THE GREEK ROOTS, **LYCOS**- "WOLF" AND **ANTHRO**- MAN, AND IS THE MOST FAMILIAR FORM OF THIS TYPE OF AFFLICTION.

BUT THERE ARE OTHER COMMON FORMS WHICH DO HAVE CERTAIN COMPENSATIONS. SUFFERERS OF **HERPANTHROPY** (WERE-SNAKES) CAN BE SENT THRU SMALL OPENINGS.

YOU CAN ALSO USE THEM TO CLEAR THE PLUMBING.

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, ED!

FELINANTHROPOIDS (WERE-TIGERS) ARE SUPERIOR NOCTURNAL FIGHTERS.

YEAH, BRING ON THEM NOCTURNALS.

GRRR!



AND **SCHTICKANTHROPY** VICTIMS (WERE-HYENAS) CAN HELP EASE TENSION IN DELICATE SITUATIONS.

...HAW HAW! NOW STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE...



HOWEVER ONCE YOU START GETTING INTO SOME OF THE MORE ESOTERIC VARIATIONS, USEFULNESS VANISHES QUICKLY, AS VICTIMS OF **ICHYANTHROPY** (WERE-FISH) KNOW.

HEY, IT COULD'VE BEEN WORSE, I MIGHT'VE BEEN A BOX OF WEREFISH-STIX!

(MRS. PAULANTHROPY)



OR **PACHIDERMANTHROPY** (WERE-ELEPHANT)

WHEW! THE TRANSFORMATION IS FINISHED, NOW WHERE DID PAT GO?



OR **CEREBANTHROPY** (WERE-AARDVARK)

I'M AFRAID THAT IT'S MORE SERIOUS THAN WE THOUGHT.



ANYWAY, WHILE **LYCANTHROPY** IS THE MOST COMMON FORM, SINCE WEREWOLVES TEND TO KILL ANYBODY AROUND THEM, THEIR USEFULNESS IS LIMITED.

I THOUGHT HE WAS ON YOUR SIDE!

SNAG'S A GOOD MAN, BUT HE TENDS TO GET A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY!



MOST PEOPLE'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH **LYCANTHROPY** IS USUALLY A SURPRISE.

HEY IRA, GET RID OF THAT DOG, WILL YOU?

- AND FIND OUT WHERE SETON WENT TO.

GRRR...



SO HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD FIND OUT NOW, WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE.

POSSIBLY THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT LYCANTHROPY IS THAT YOU CAN BE FAIRLY CERTAIN WHEN YOU'VE GOTTEN IT.



ACCORDING TO LEGEND, ONLY TWO THINGS CAN KILL A WEREWOLF: A WEAPON BLESSED IN A CHAPEL CONSECRATED TO ST. HUBERT, PATRON SAINT OF HUNTERS

I CAN'T GET HELP FROM ST. HUBERT - I SUBSCRIBE TO THE NORSE PANTHEON!

THE ONLY THING THEY COULD HELP YOU OUT WITH WOULD BE A WERE-HERRING.



OR SILVER, A PROVEN CURE-ALL AGAINST MANY SUPERNATURAL NASTIES... USUALLY.



A PERSON CAN BE CURED OF LYCANTHROPY, BUT IT IS A LONG AND COMPLICATED PROCEDURE, SIMILAR TO GOING ON A DIET.

TSK, TSK, BACKSLIDING AGAIN, MR. JONES?



AND FINALLY, NOBODY WANTS TO BE A WERE-WOLF, ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'LL BE DETECTED, YOU DO TERRIBLE THINGS IN YOUR CURSED STATE - KILLING, MAIMING, BRINGING TERROR INTO THE LIVES OF THOSE ALL AROUND YOU...



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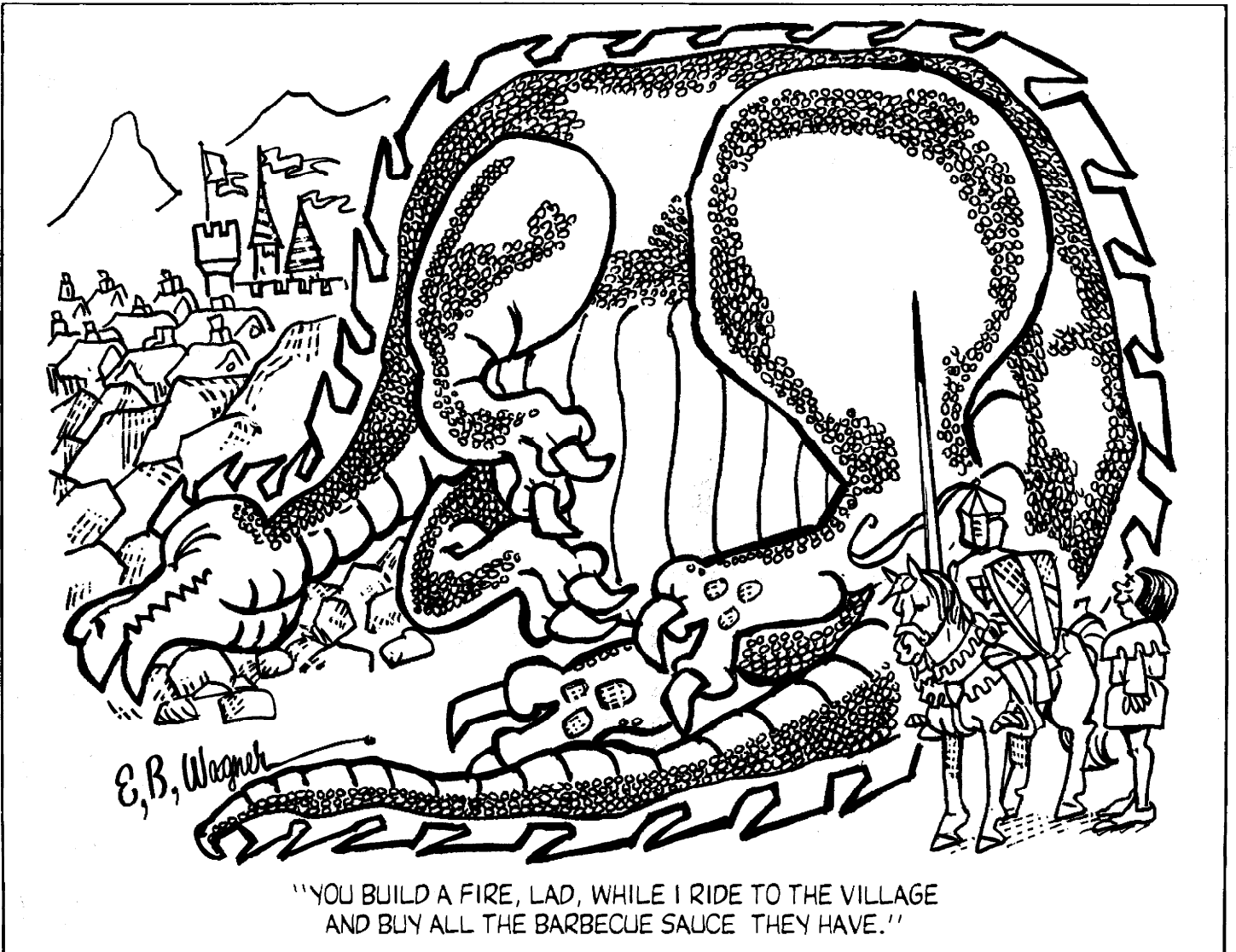




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FOR A MILLION BUCKS."



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"YOU BUILD A FIRE, LAD, WHILE I RIDE TO THE VILLAGE
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